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(12) United States Patent
Ilercil

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(54) **THERMO-ELECTRIC HEAT PUMP SYSTEMS**

(71) Applicant: **MICRO Q TECHNOLOGIES**, Scottsdale, AZ (US)

(72) Inventor: **Alp Ilercil**, Scottsdale, AZ (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **14/228,048**

(22) Filed: **Mar. 27, 2014**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2014/0318153 A1 Oct. 30, 2014

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 14/176,078, filed on Feb. 8, 2014, which is a continuation of application No. 13/146,635, filed as application No. PCT/US2010/022459 on Jan. 28, 2010, now Pat. No. 8,646,282, which is a continuation-in-part of application No. 12/361,484, filed on Jan. 28, 2009, now Pat. No. 8,677,767.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/148,911, filed on Jan. 30, 2009, provisional application No. 61/805,926, filed on Mar. 27, 2013.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
F25B 21/04 (2006.01)
F25B 21/02 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***F25B 21/04*** (2013.01); ***F25B 21/02*** (2013.01); *F25B 2321/023* (2013.01); *F25B 2321/0212* (2013.01); *F25B 2321/0251* (2013.01)

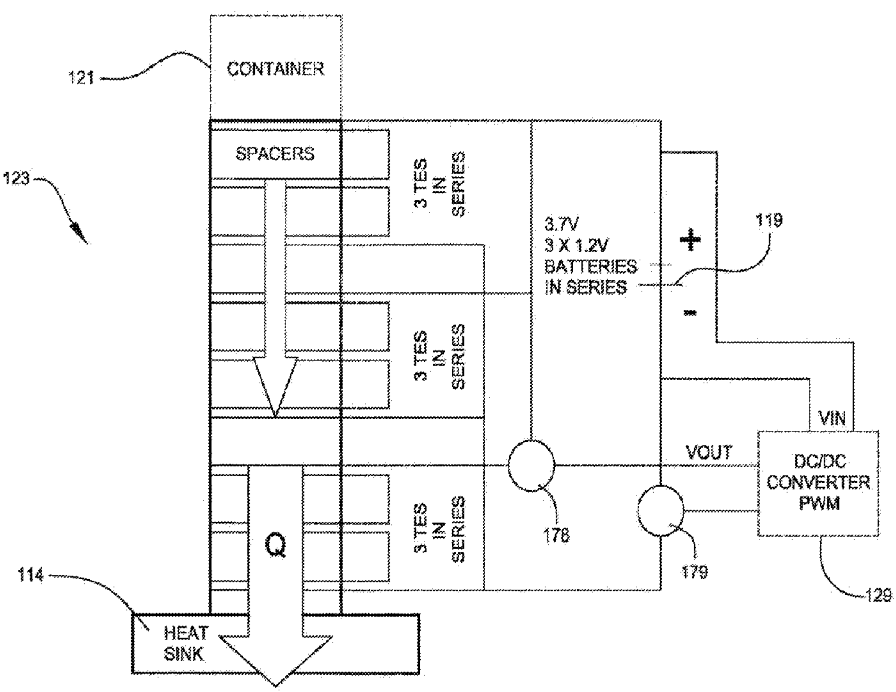
(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC .. F25B 21/02; F25B 2321/00; F25B 2321/02; F25B 2321/021; F25B 2321/0212; F25B 2321/023
USPC 62/3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.62, 371
See application file for complete search history.

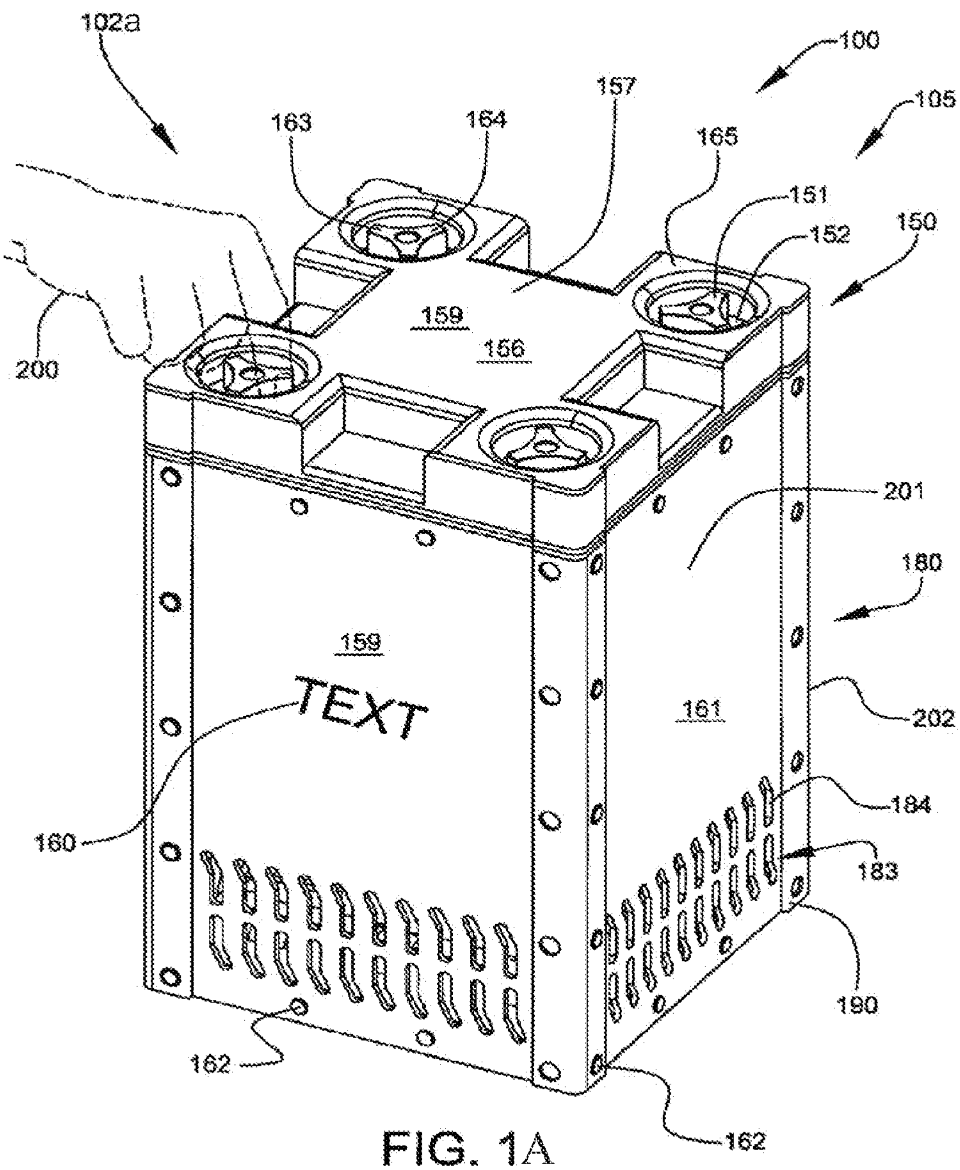
Primary Examiner — Jonathan Bradford
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Rodney J. Fuller; Booth Udall Fuller, PLC

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The disclosure is directed to an energy efficient thermal protection assembly. The thermal protection assembly can include three or more thermoelectric unit layers capable of active use of the Peltier effect; and at least one capacitance spacer block suitable for storing heat and providing a delayed thermal reaction time of the assembly. The capacitance spacer block is thermally connected between the thermoelectric unit layers. The present disclosure further relates to a thermoelectric transport and storage devices for transporting or storing temperature sensitive goods, for example, vaccines, chemicals, biologicals, and other temperature sensitive goods. The transport or storage device can be configured and provide on-board energy storage for sustaining, for multiple days, at a constant-temperature, with an acceptable temperature variation band.

19 Claims, 40 Drawing Sheets




102a
100
157
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164
165
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TEXT
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183
160
162
190
162

FIG. 1A

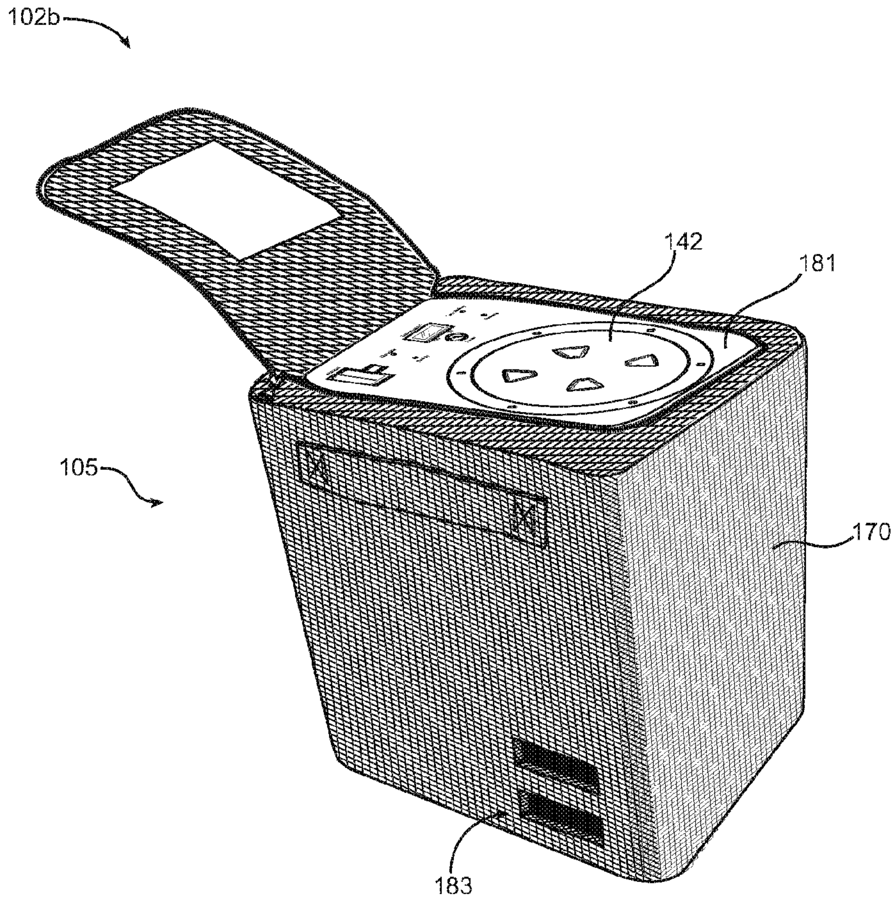


FIG. 1B

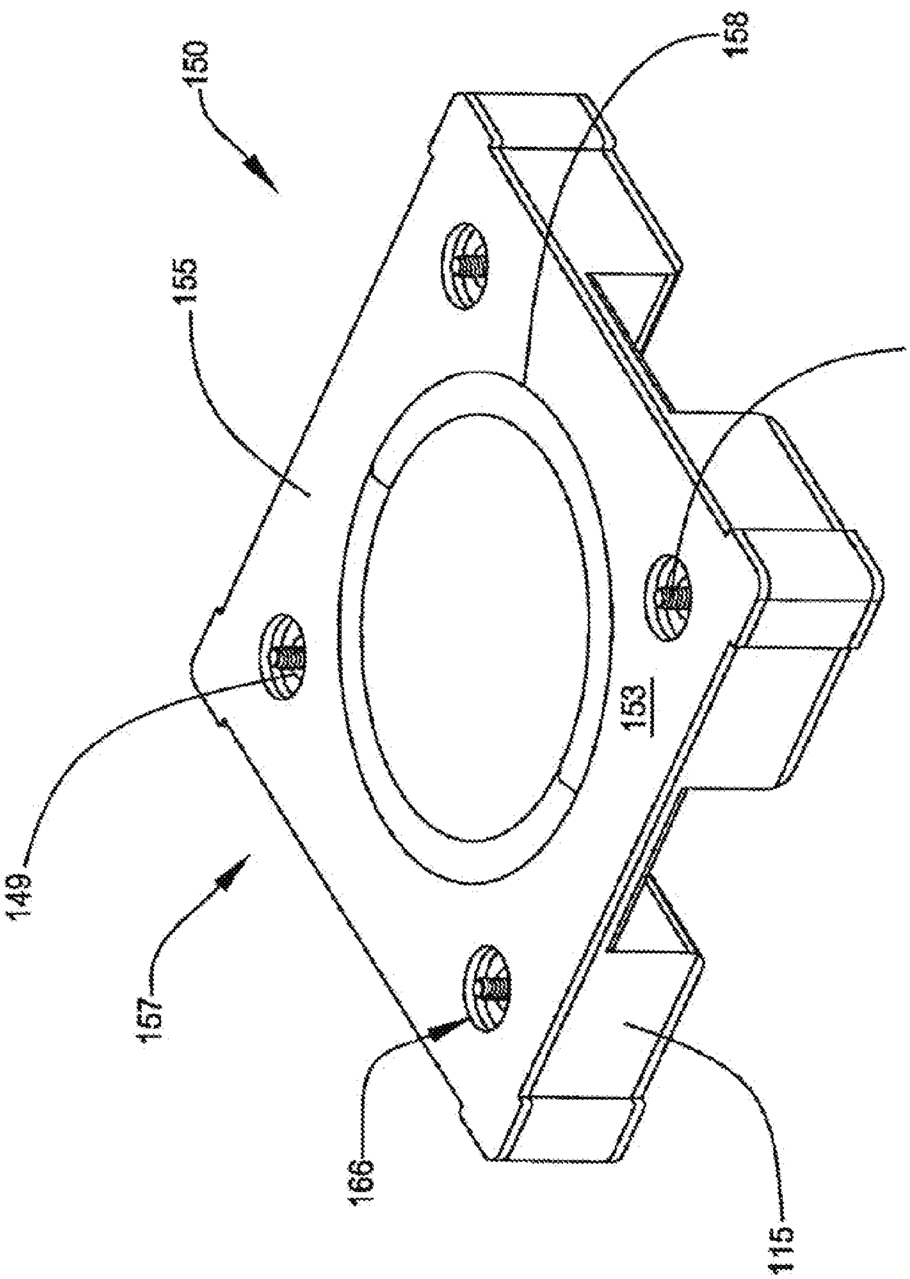


FIG. 2A

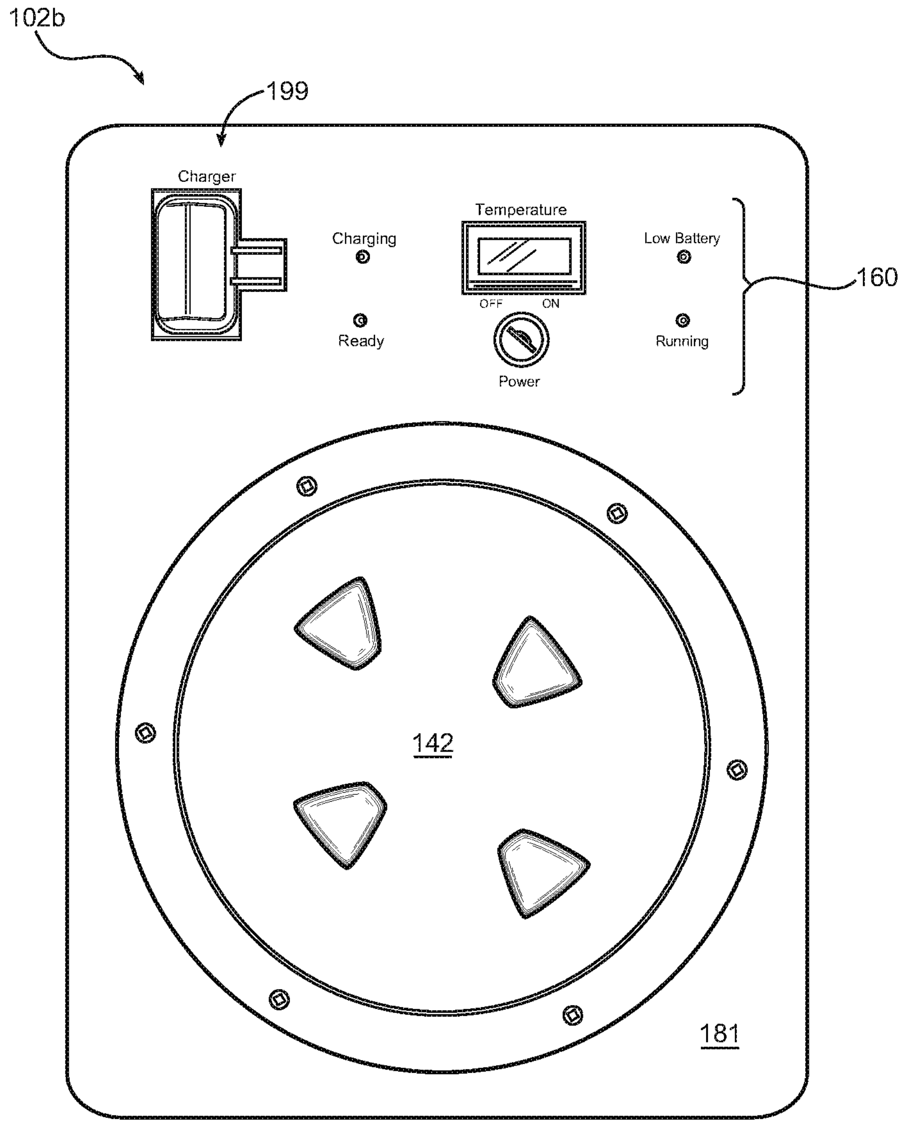

102b
199
Charger
Charging
Ready
Temperature
OFF
ON
Power
Low Battery
Running
160
142
181

FIG. 2B

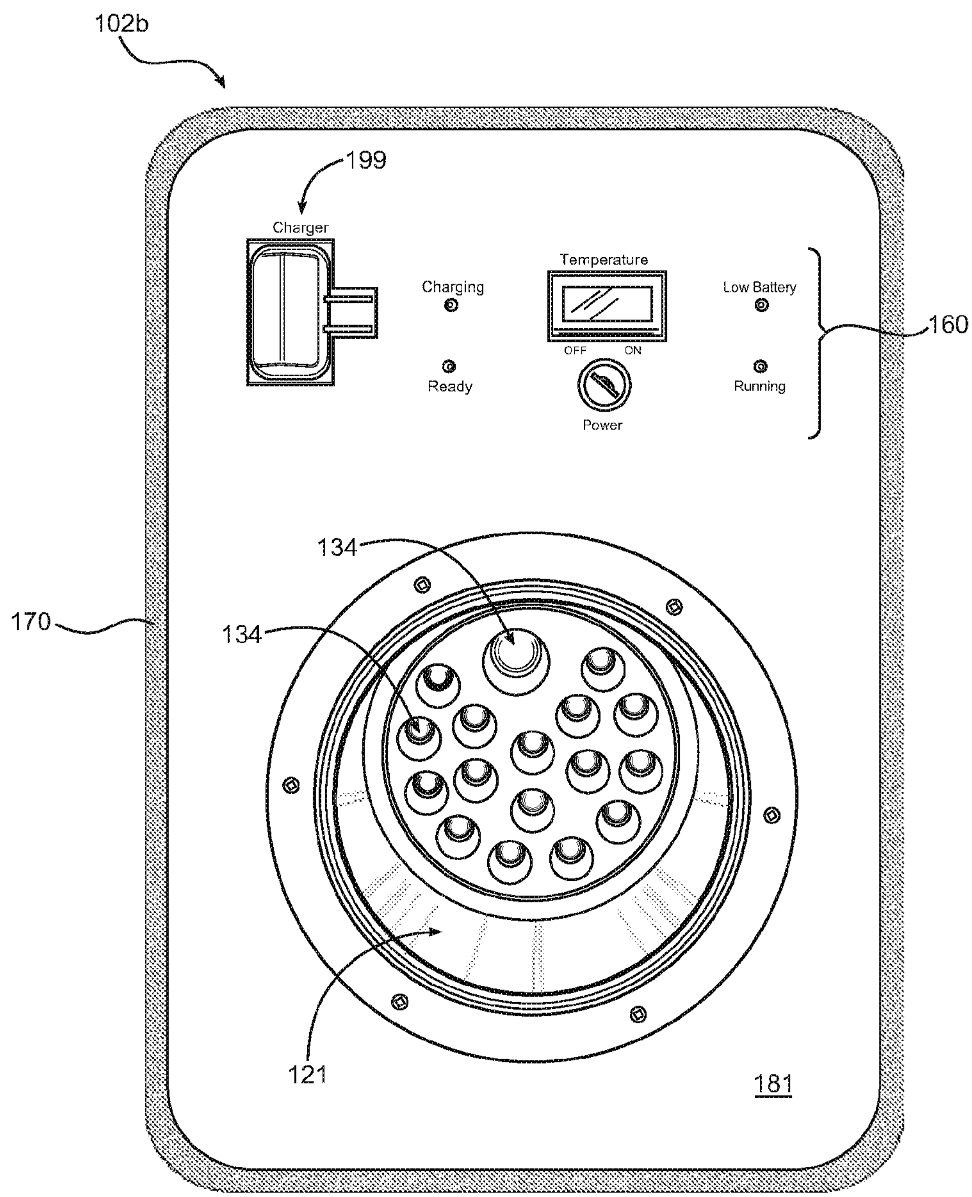
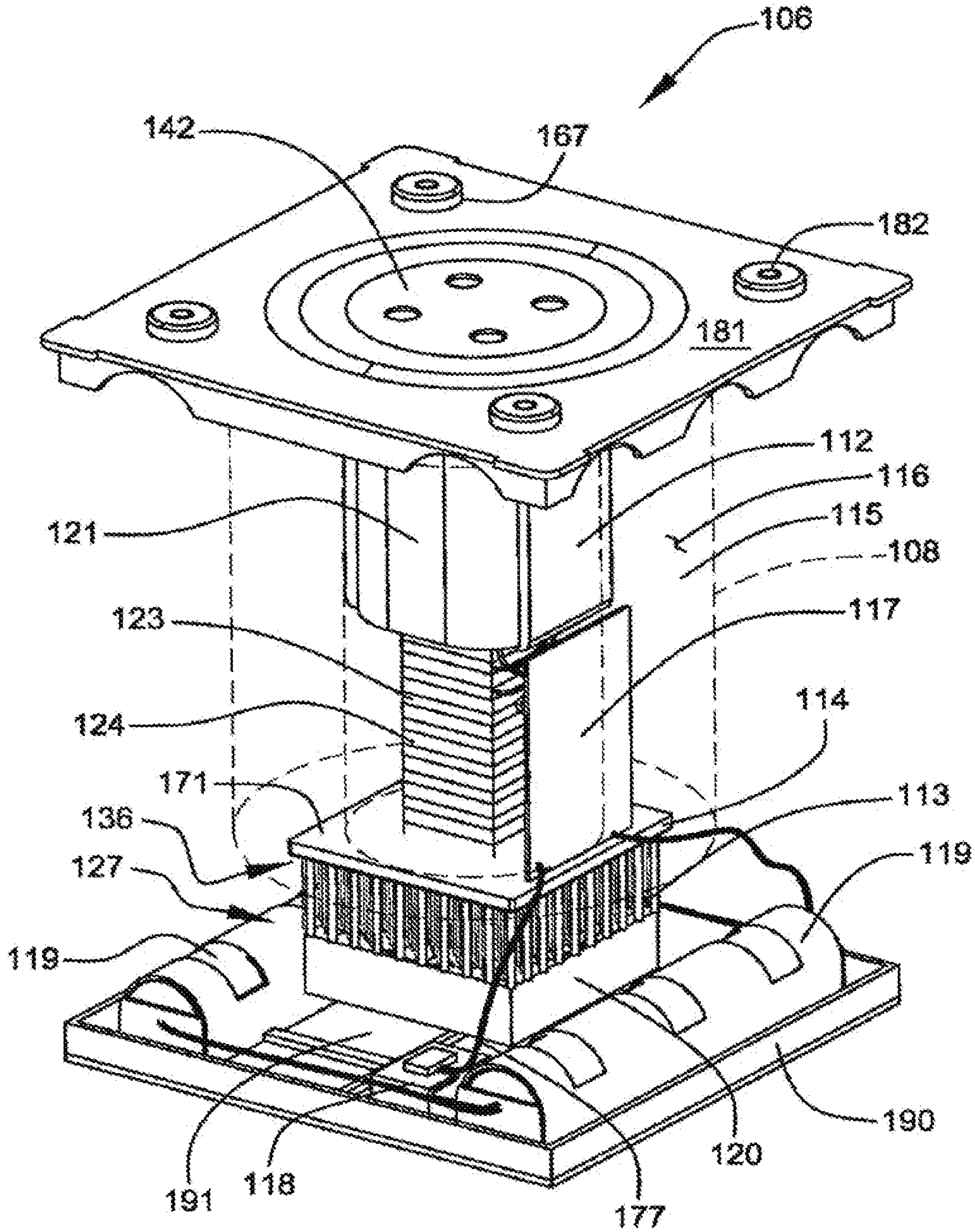

102b
199
Charger
Charging
Ready
Temperature
OFF
ON
Power
Low Battery
Running
160
170
134
134
121
181

FIG. 2C


106
142
167
182
181
112
116
121
115
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136
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119
191
118
177
120
190

FIG. 3

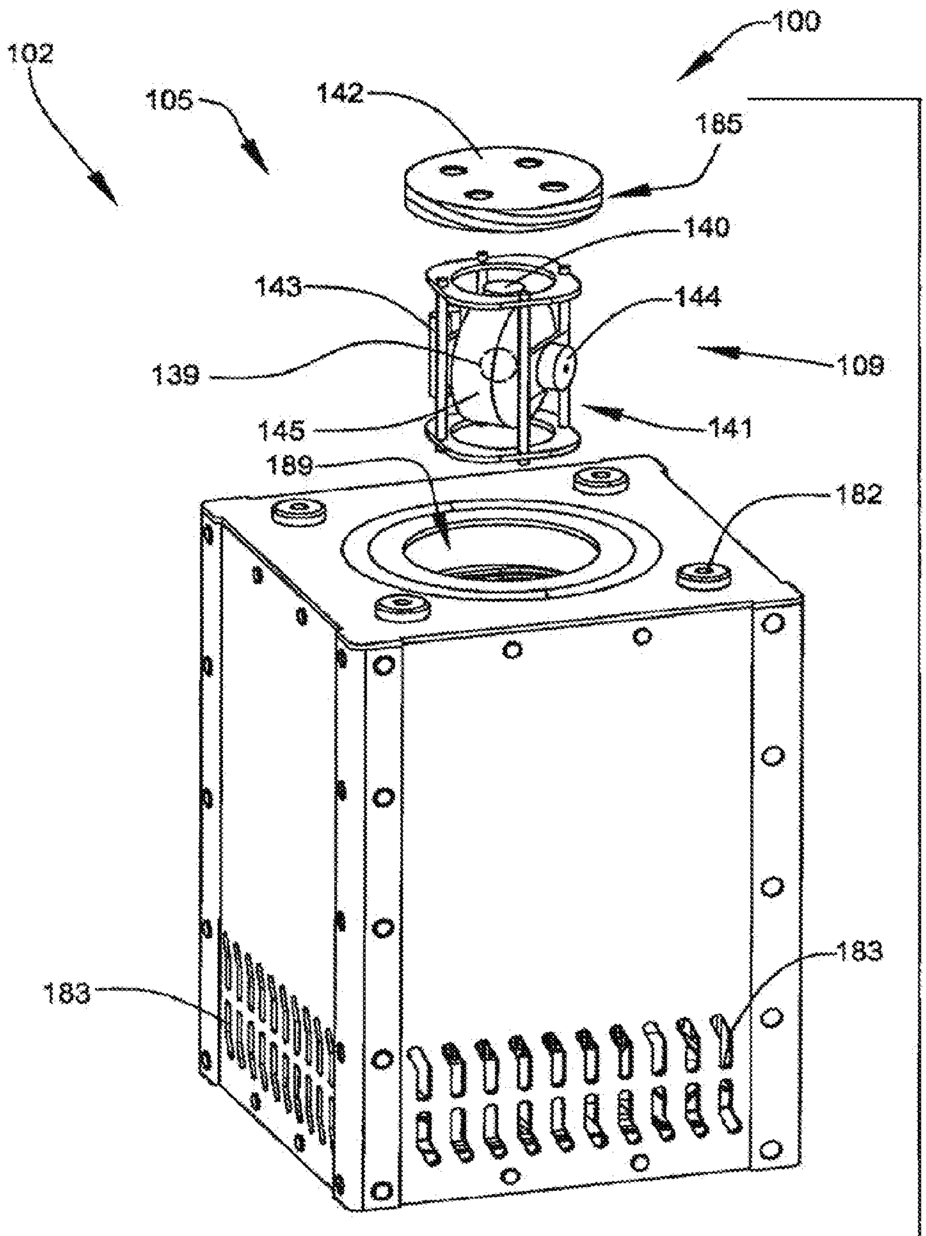

FIG. 4

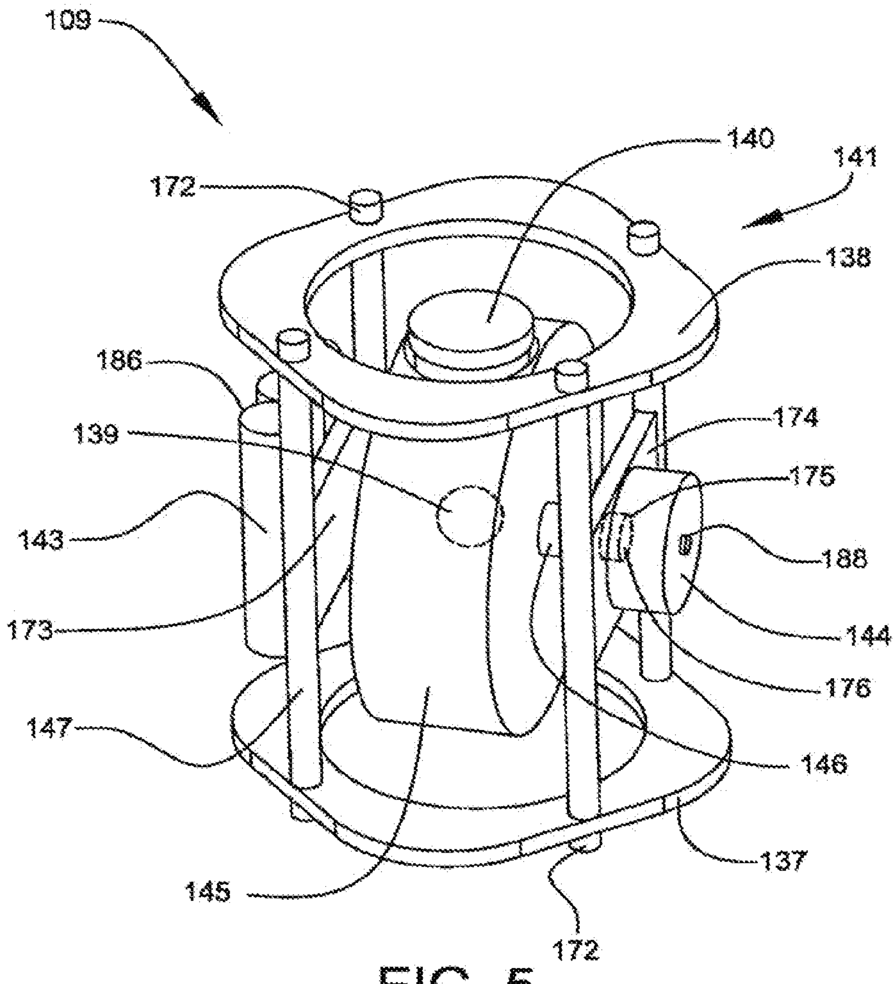
109
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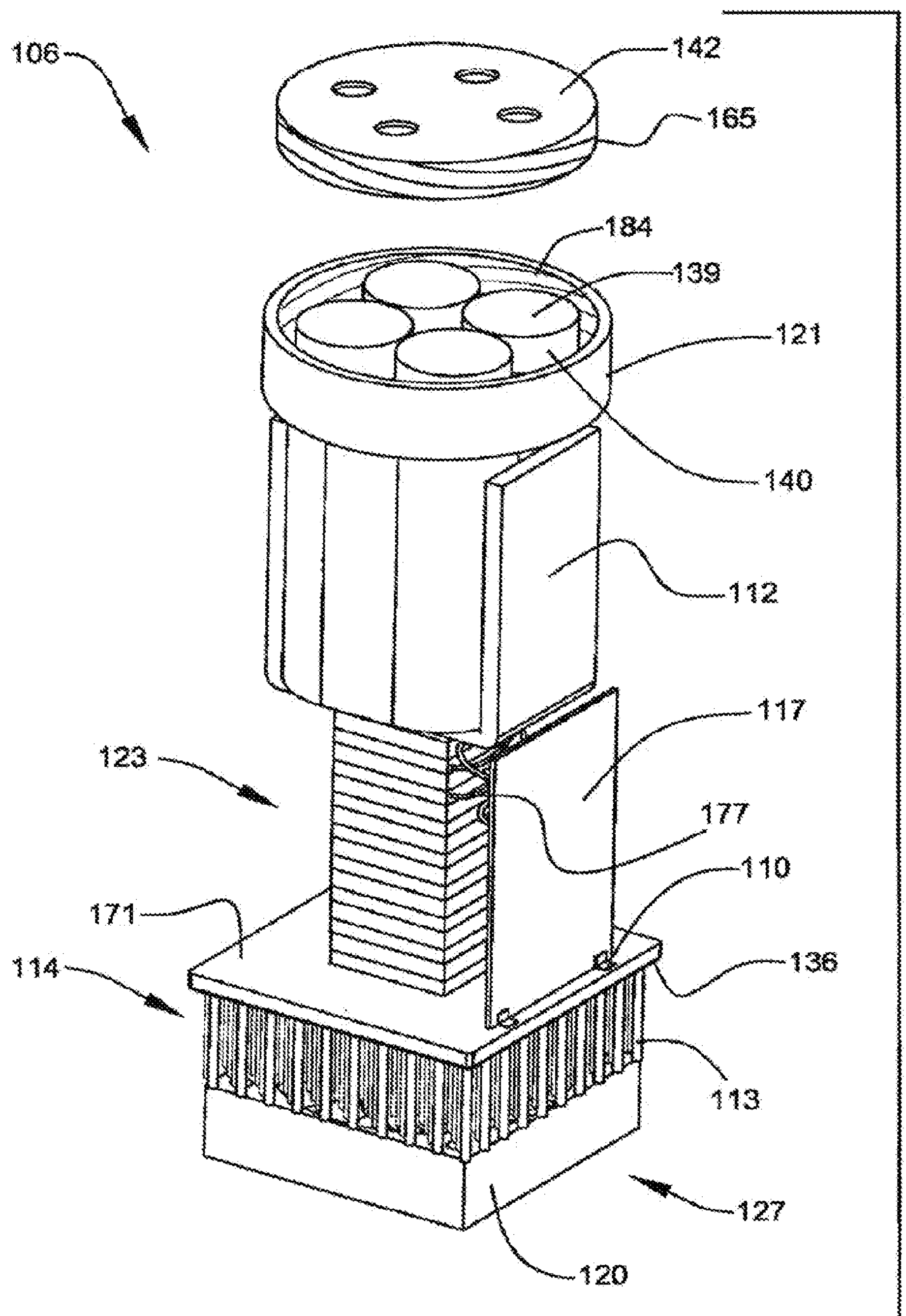
FIG. 5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142
165
184
139
121
140
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123
177
110
171
136
114
113
127
120

FIG. 6

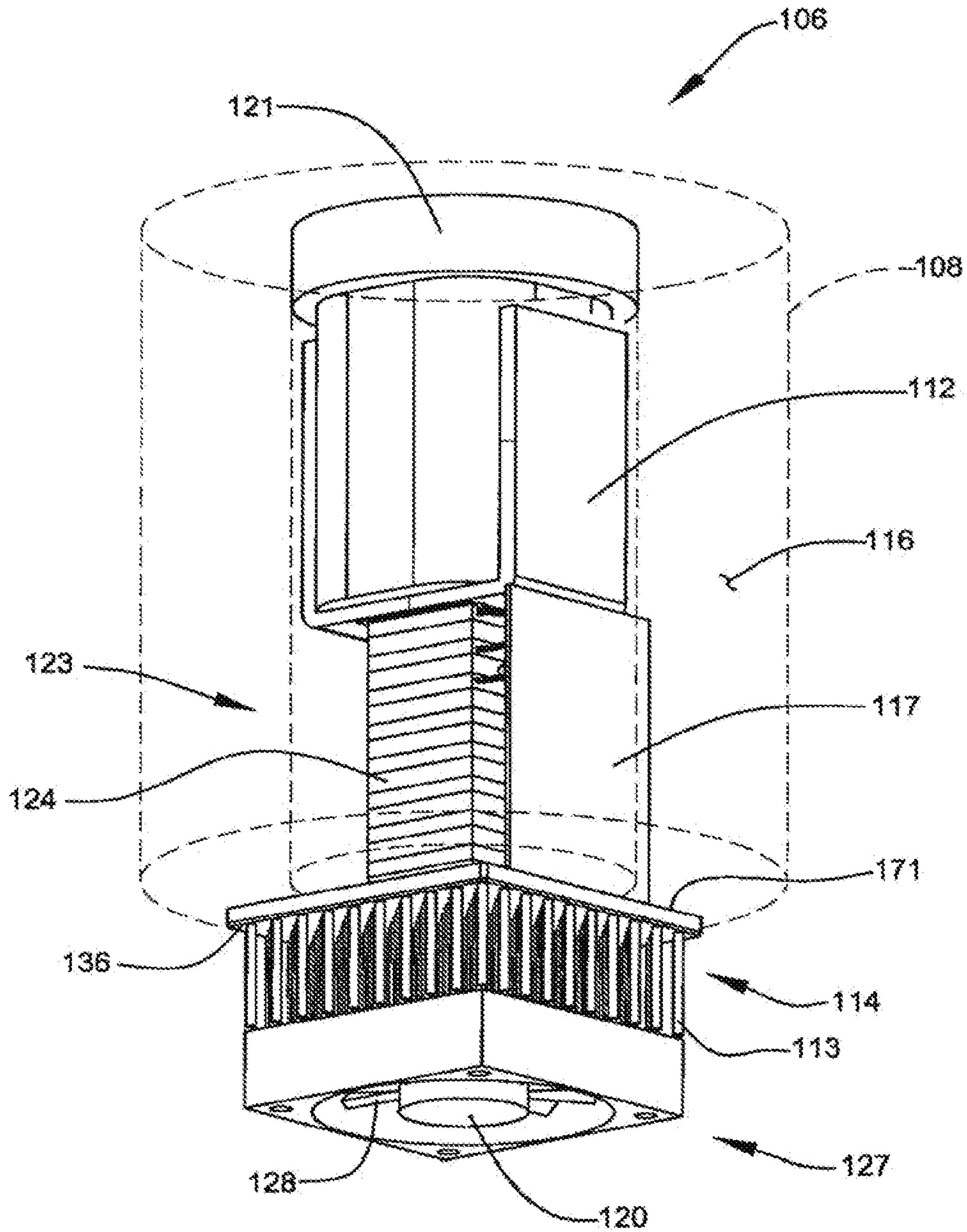


FIG. 7

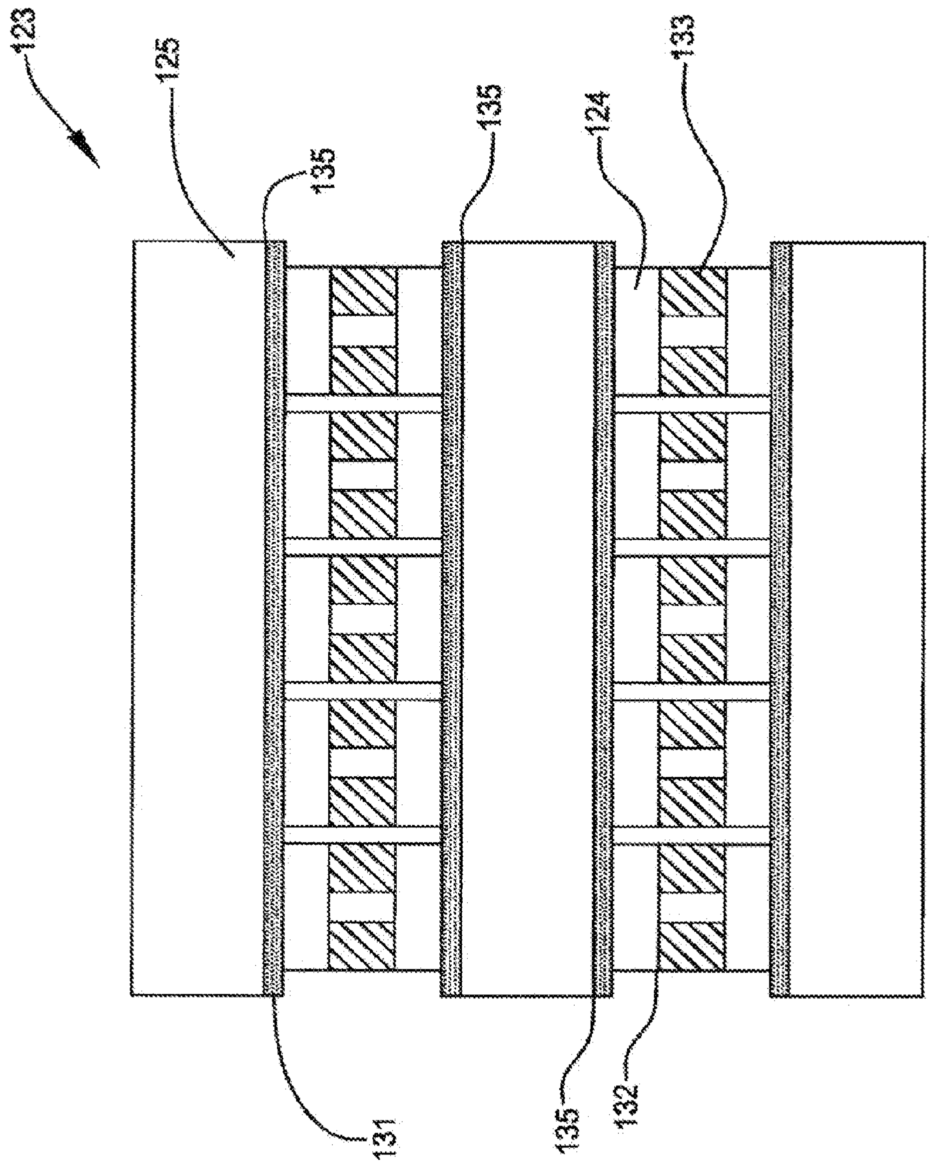
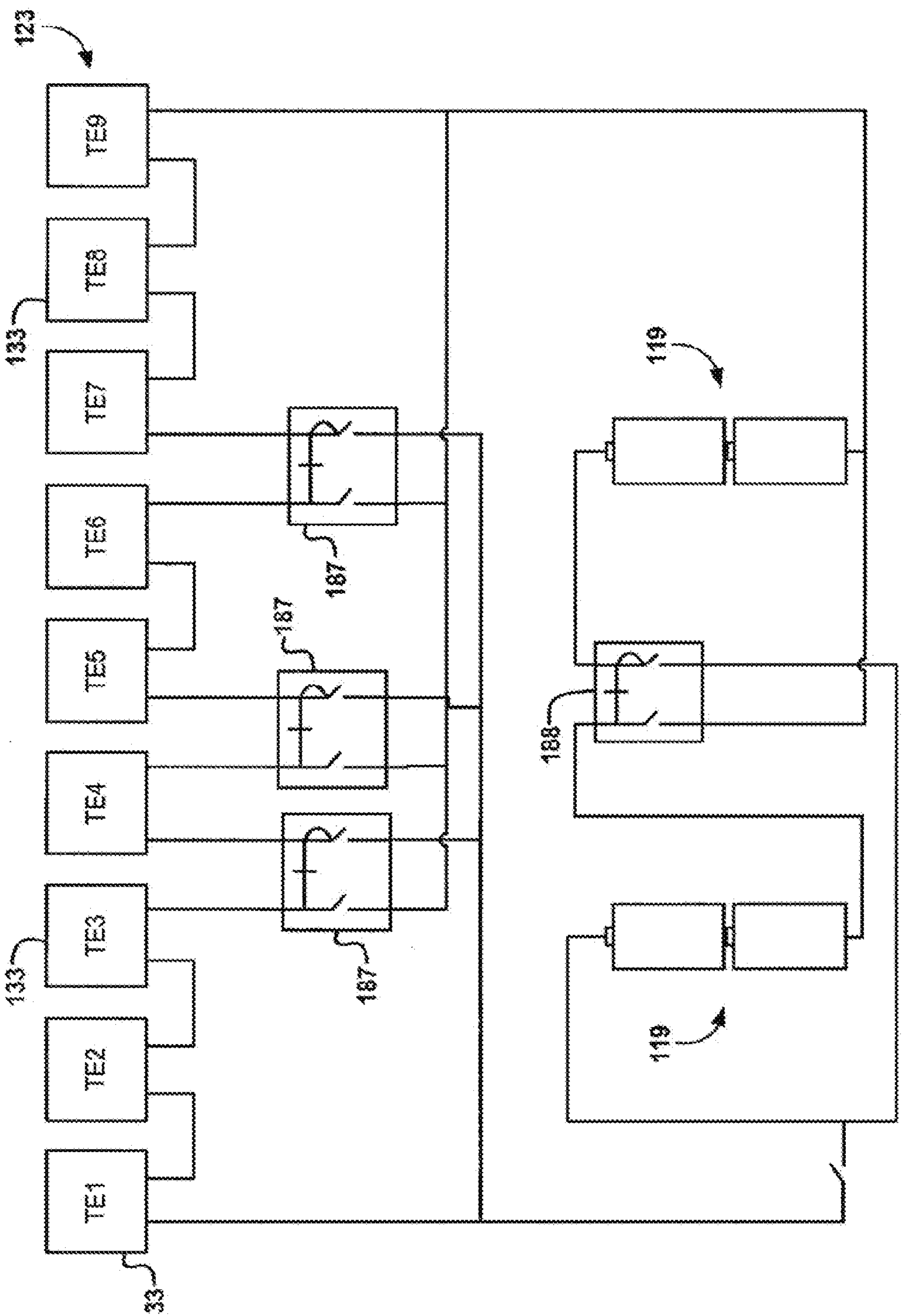
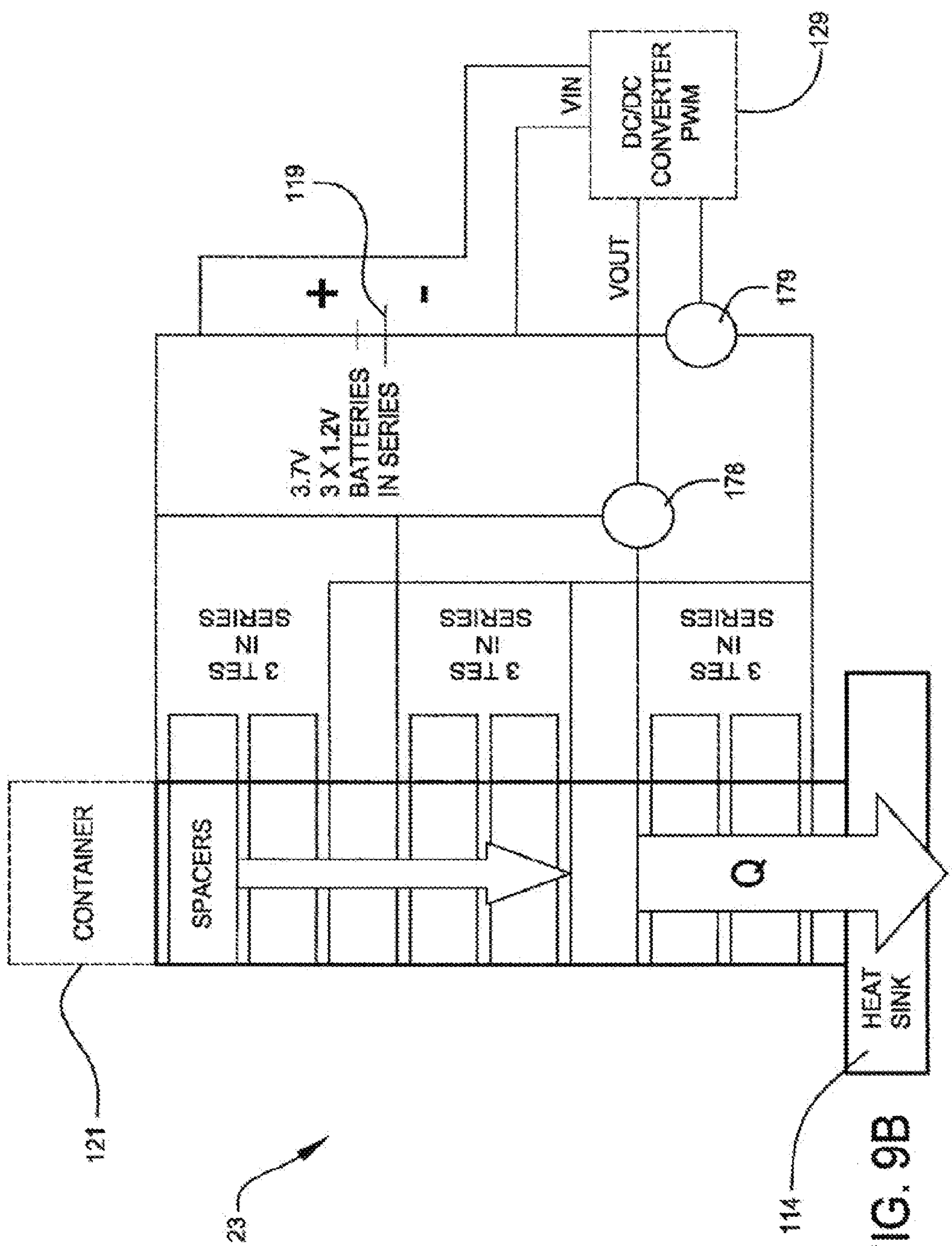


FIG. 8



123
TE9
TE8
TE7
TE6
TE5
TE4
TE3
TE2
TE1
133
133
133
187
187
187
188
119
119

FIG. 9A



DC/DC CONVERTER PWM
VIN
VOUT
129
119
+
-
3.7V 3 X 1.2V BATTERIES IN SERIES
179
178
3 TES IN SERIES
3 TES IN SERIES
3 TES IN SERIES
CONTAINER
SPACERS
Q
HEAT SINK
121
123
114

FIG. 9B

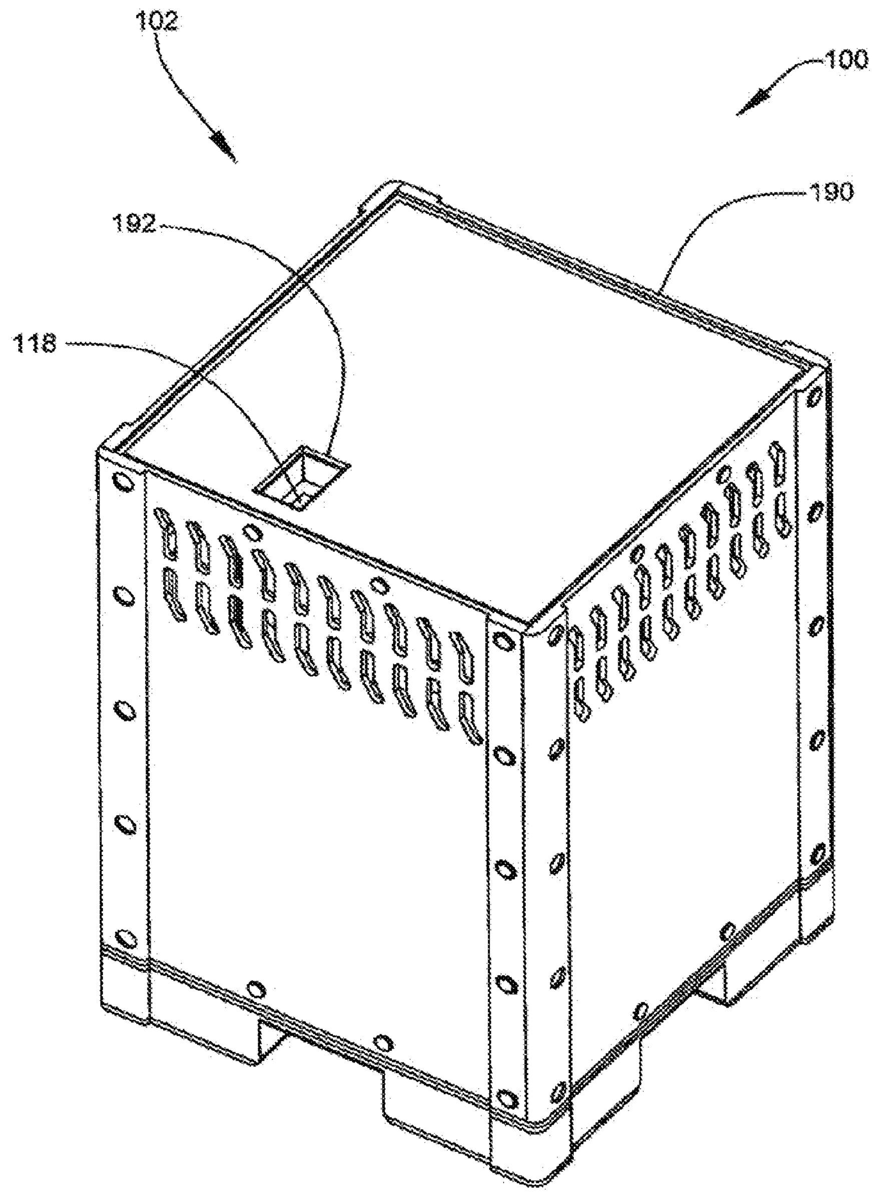


FIG. 10

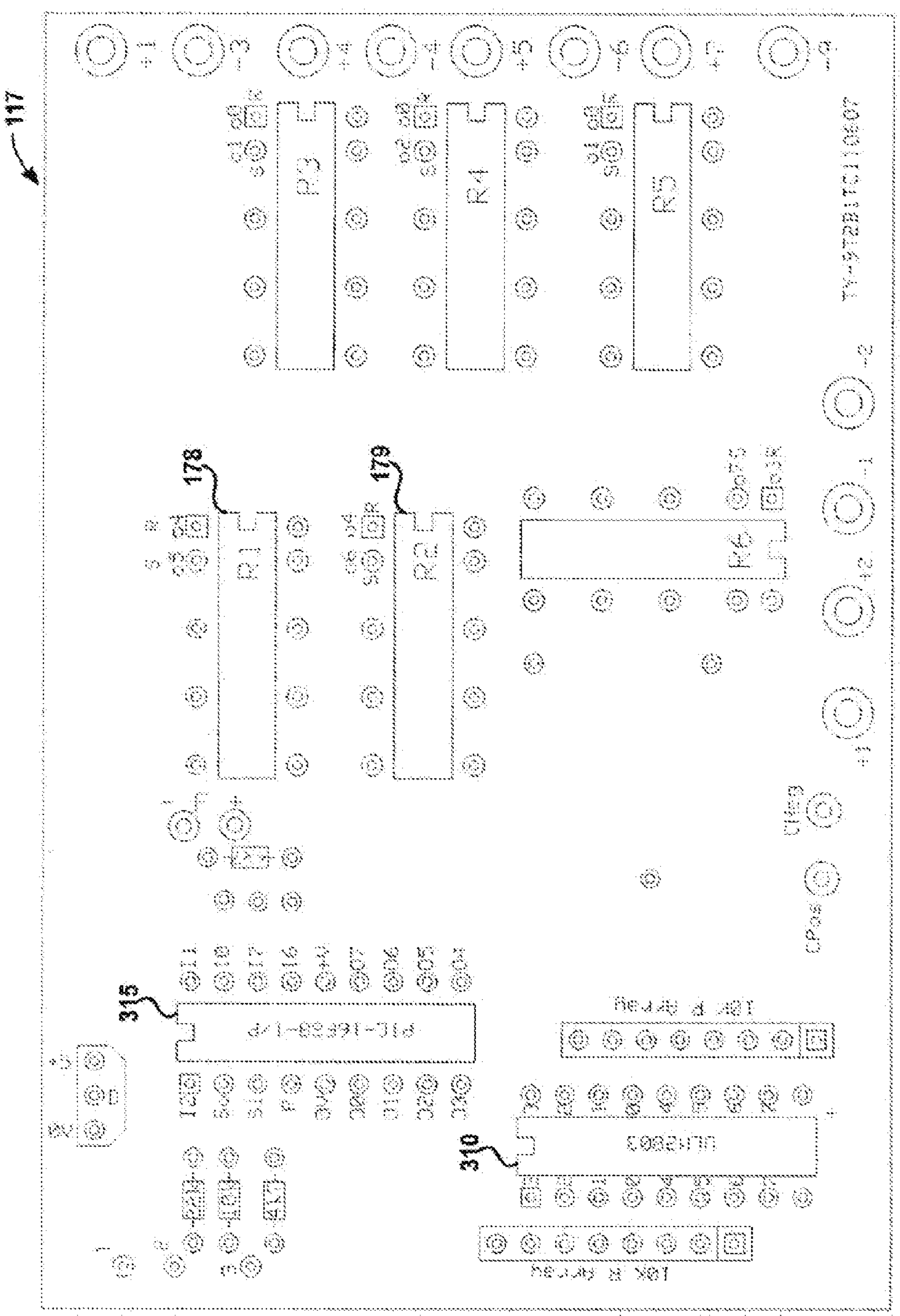

117
178
179
315
310
R1
R2
R3
R4
R5
R6
PIC-16F628-I/P
ULN2803
10K R Array
CPos
CNeg

FIG. 11

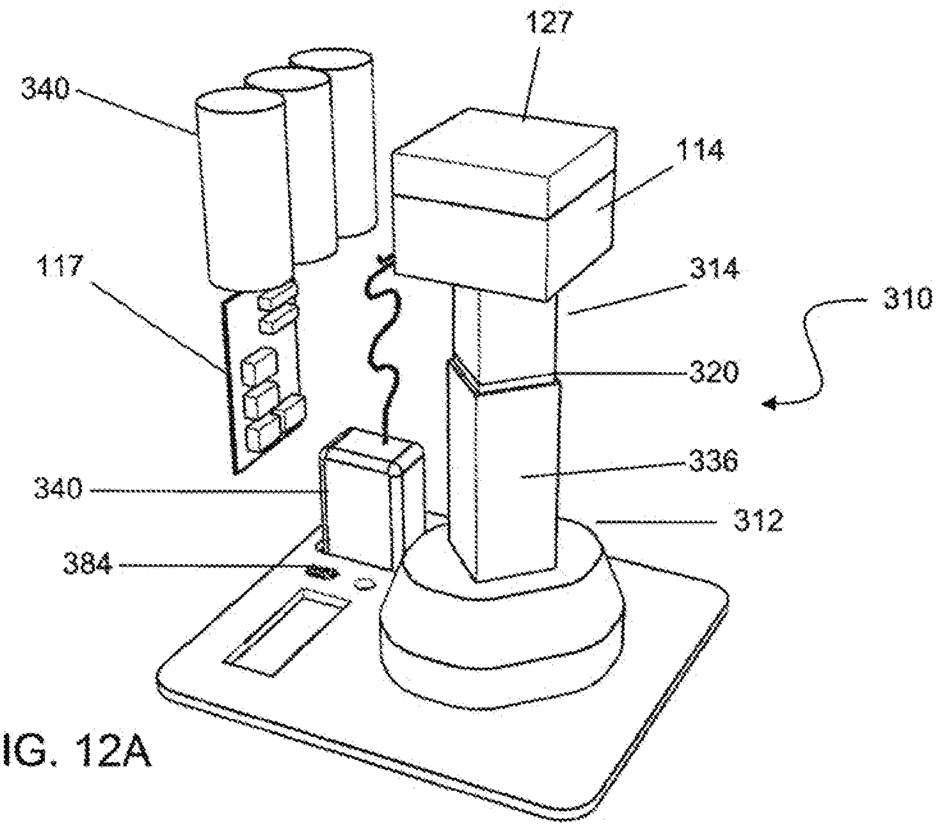


FIG. 12A

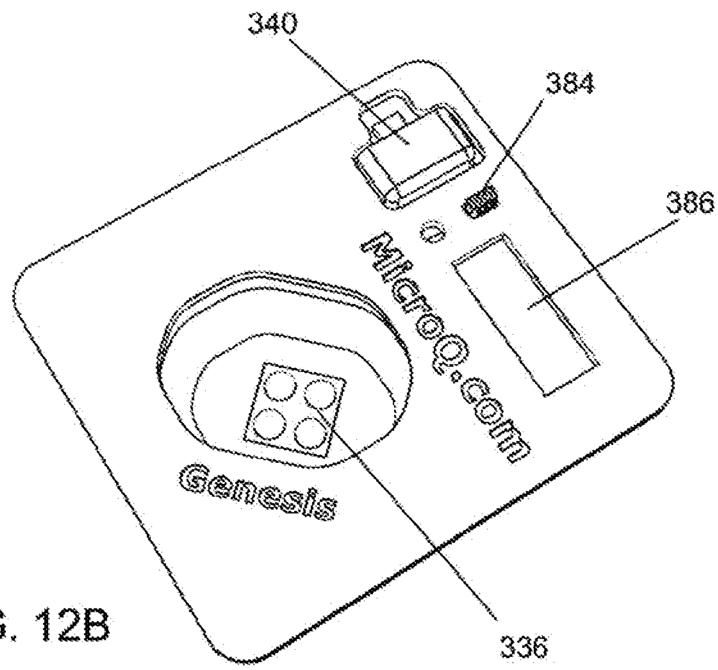


FIG. 12B

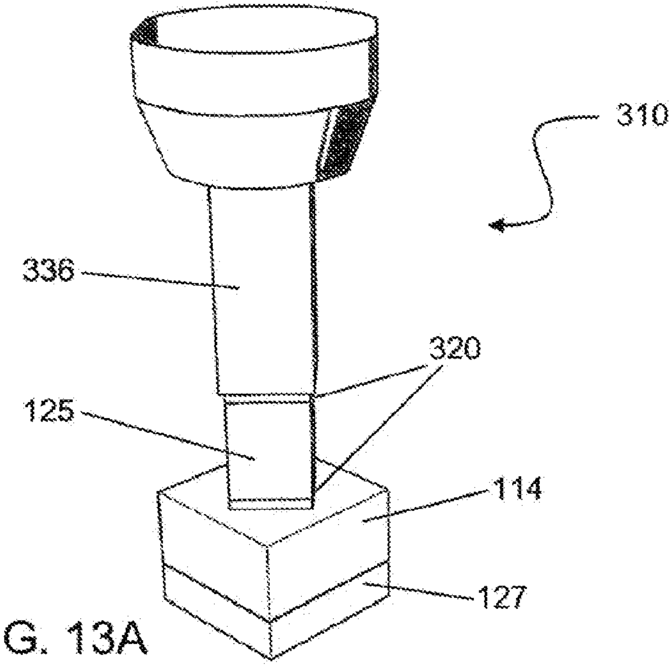


FIG. 13A

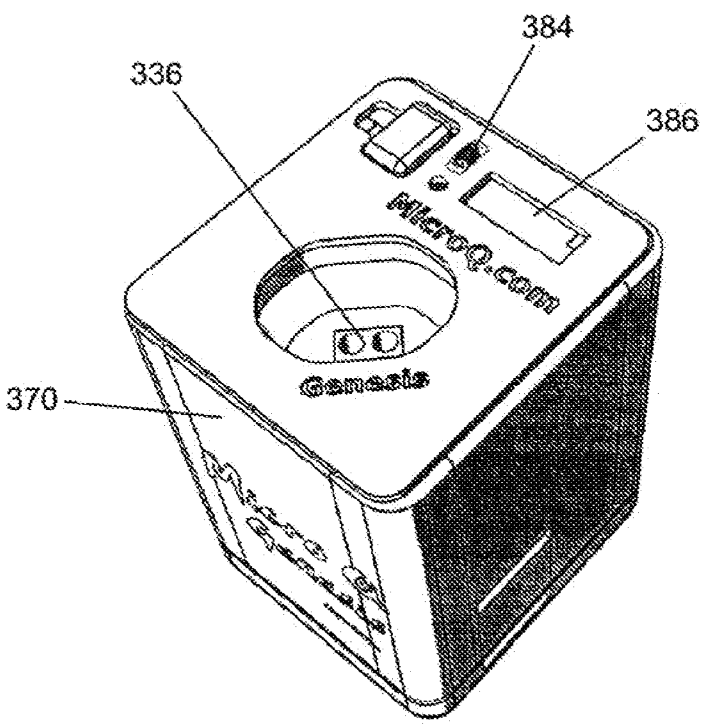


FIG. 13B

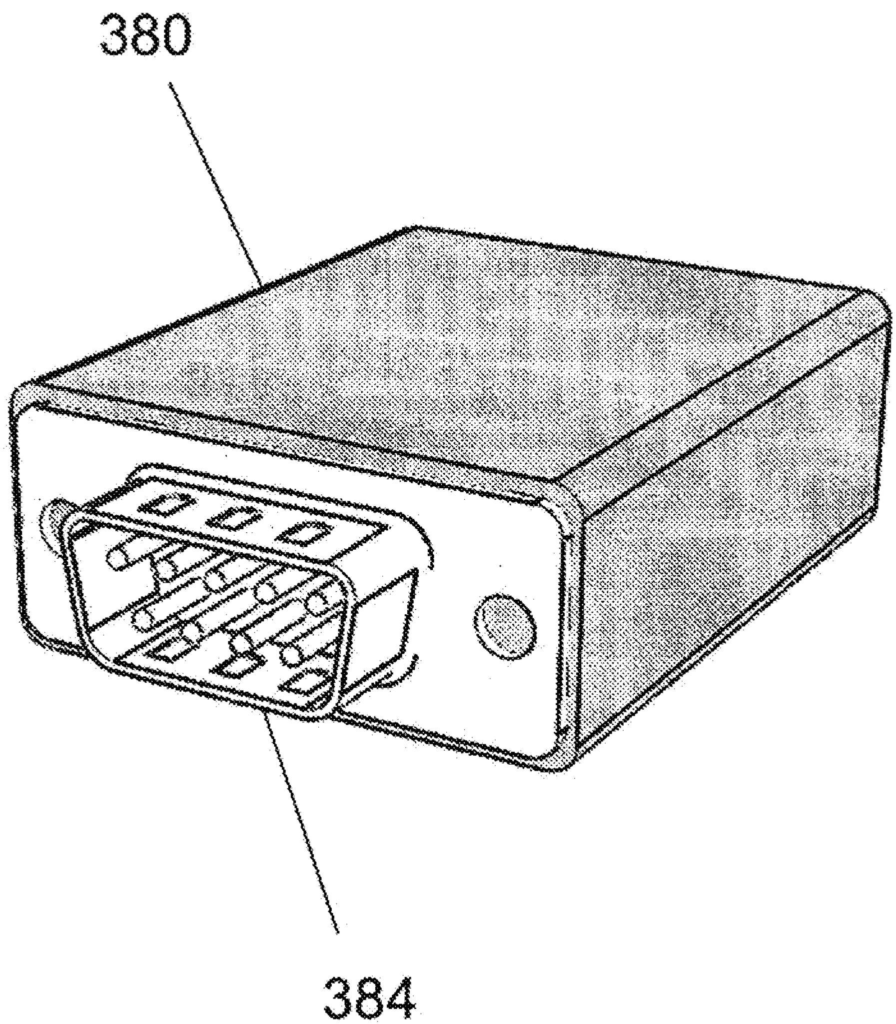


FIG. 14

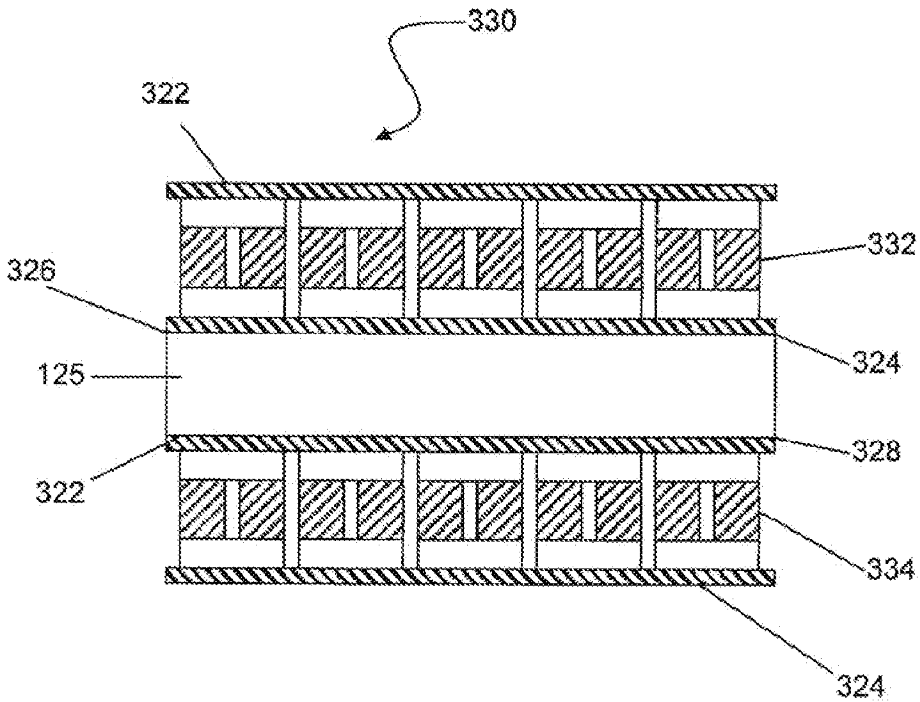


FIG. 15

Control Hardware Block Diagram

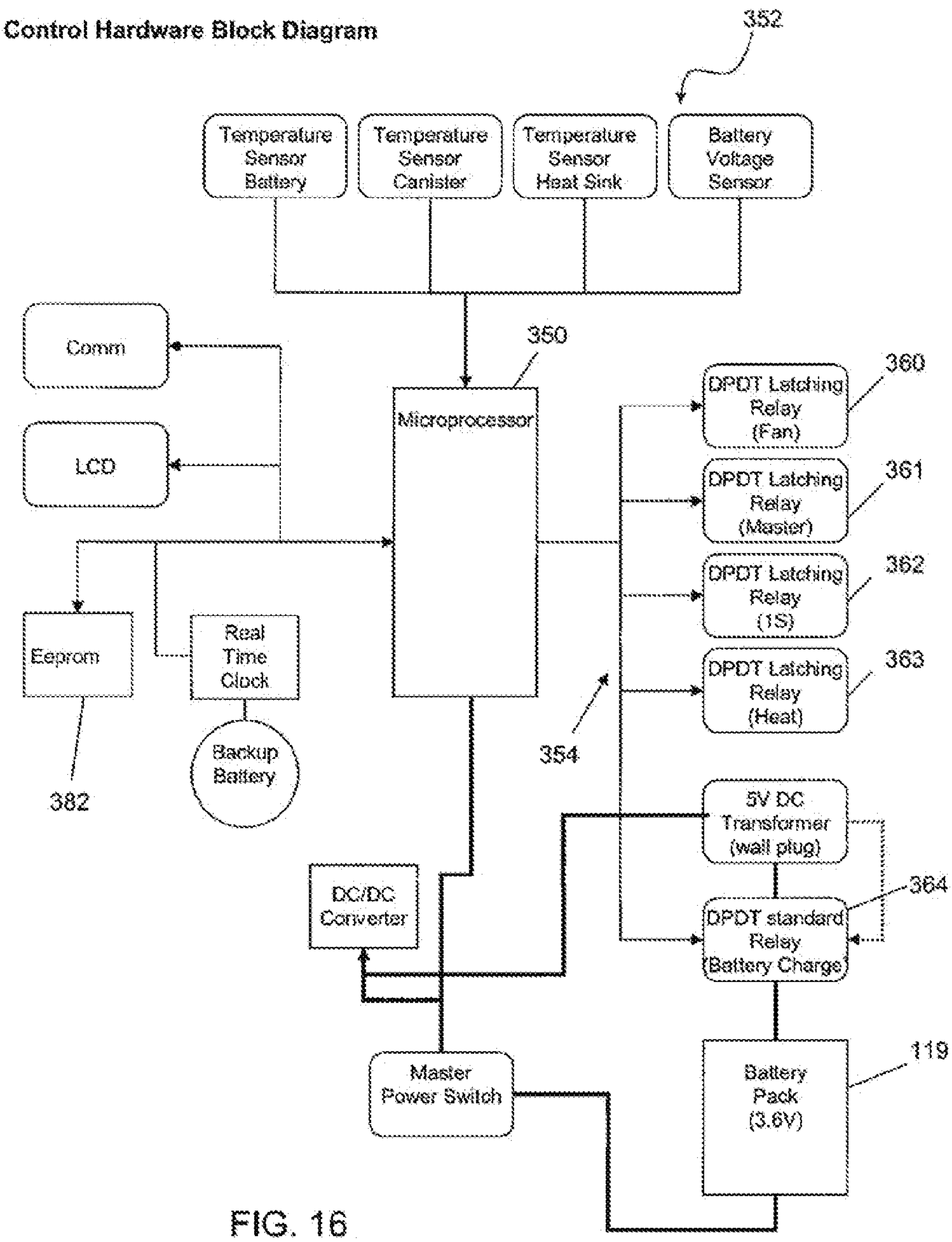


FIG. 16

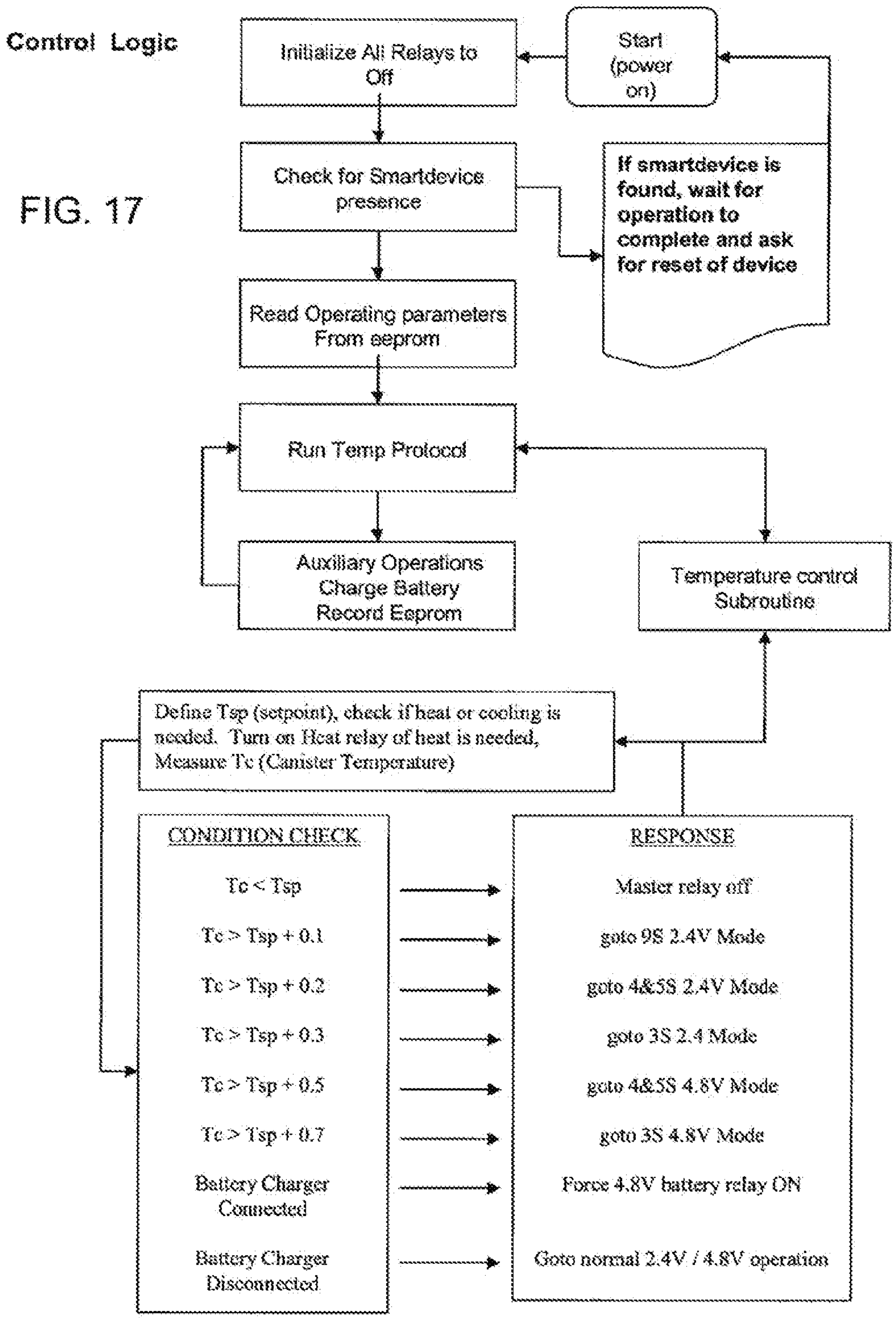
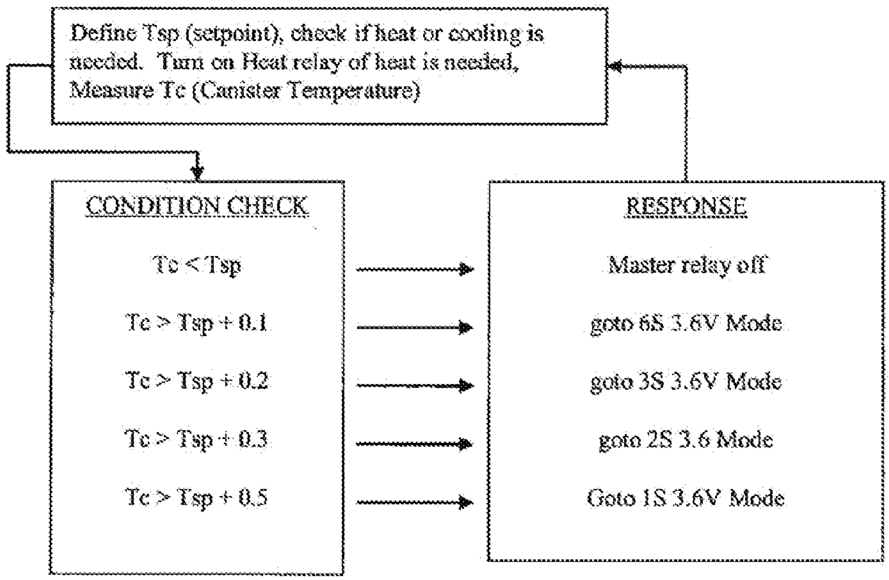

Control Logic
Start (power on)
Initialize All Relays to Off
Check for Smartdevice presence
If smartdevice is found, wait for operation to complete and ask for reset of device
Read Operating parameters From eeprom
Run Temp Protocol
Auxiliary Operations Charge Battery Record Eeprom
Temperature control Subroutine
Define Tsp (setpoint), check if heat or cooling is needed. Turn on Heat relay of heat is needed, Measure Tc (Canister Temperature)
CONDITION CHECK
Tc < Tsp
Tc > Tsp + 0.1
Tc > Tsp + 0.2
Tc > Tsp + 0.3
Tc > Tsp + 0.5
Tc > Tsp + 0.7
Battery Charger Connected
Battery Charger Disconnected
RESPONSE
Master relay off
goto 9S 2.4V Mode
goto 4&5S 2.4V Mode
goto 3S 2.4 Mode
goto 4&5S 4.8V Mode
goto 3S 4.8V Mode
Force 4.8V battery relay ON
Goto normal 2.4V / 4.8V operation

FIG. 17

Option



Option

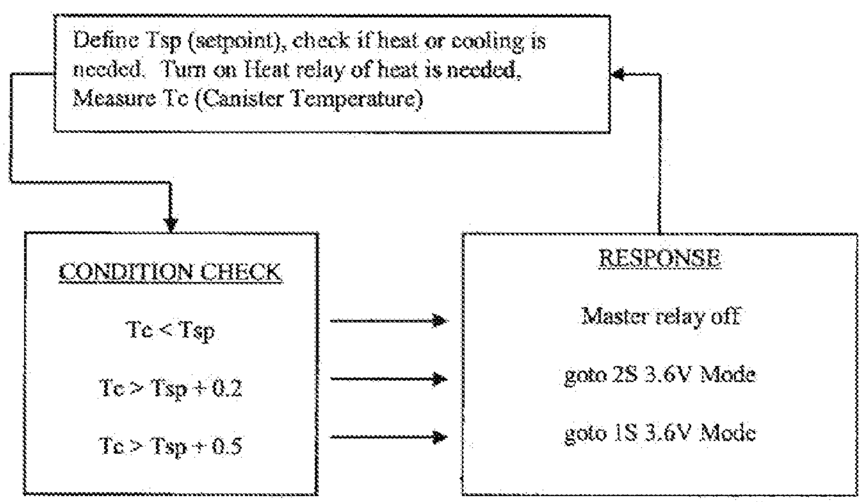
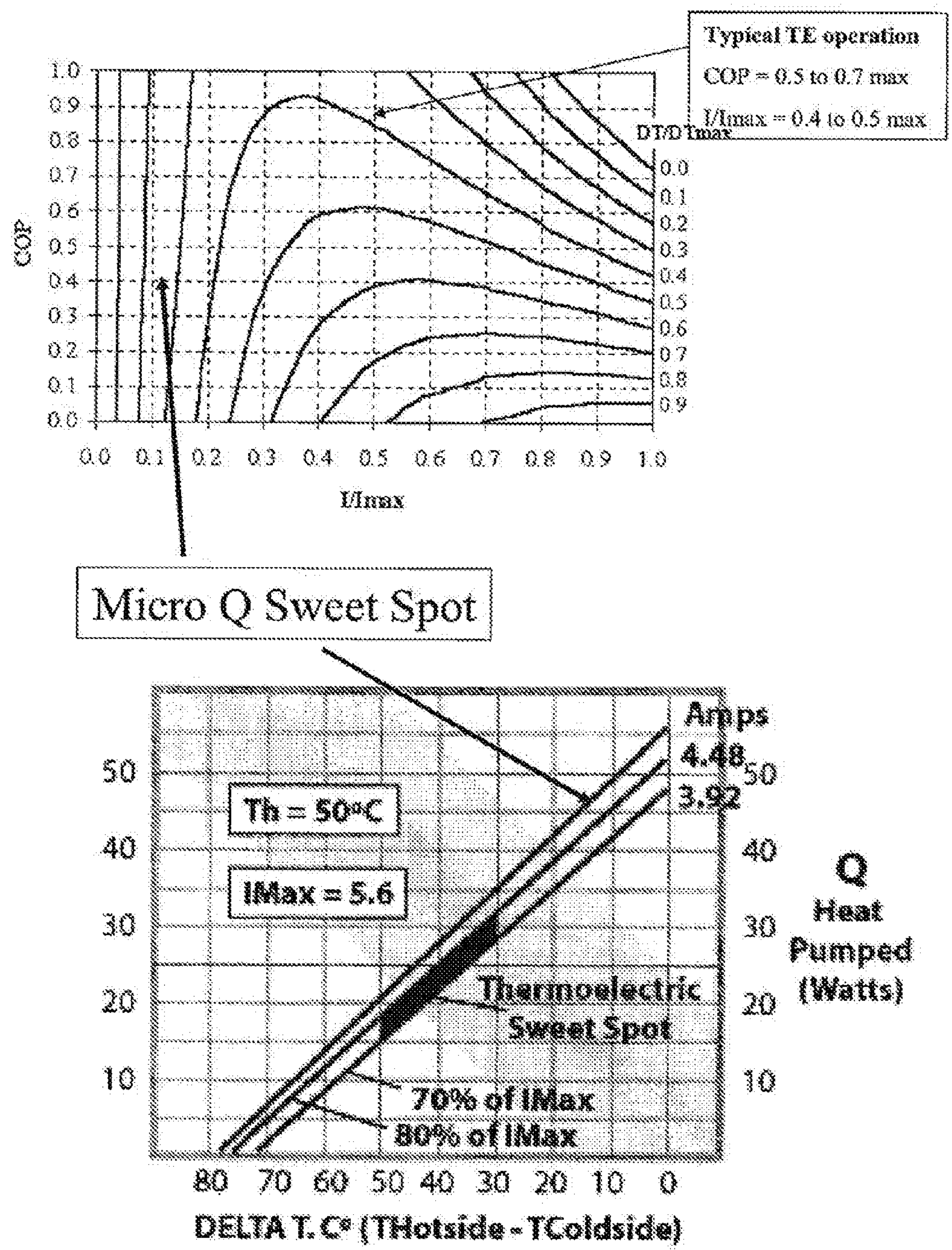


FIG. 18



Typical TE operation
COP = 0.5 to 0.7 max
I/Imax = 0.4 to 0.5 max
DT/DTmax
COP
I/Imax
Micro Q Sweet Spot
Amps
4.48
3.92
Th = 50°C
IMax = 5.6
Q
Heat
Pumped
(Watts)
Thermoelectric
Sweet Spot
70% of IMax
80% of IMax
DELTA T. C° (THotside - TColdside)

FIG. 19

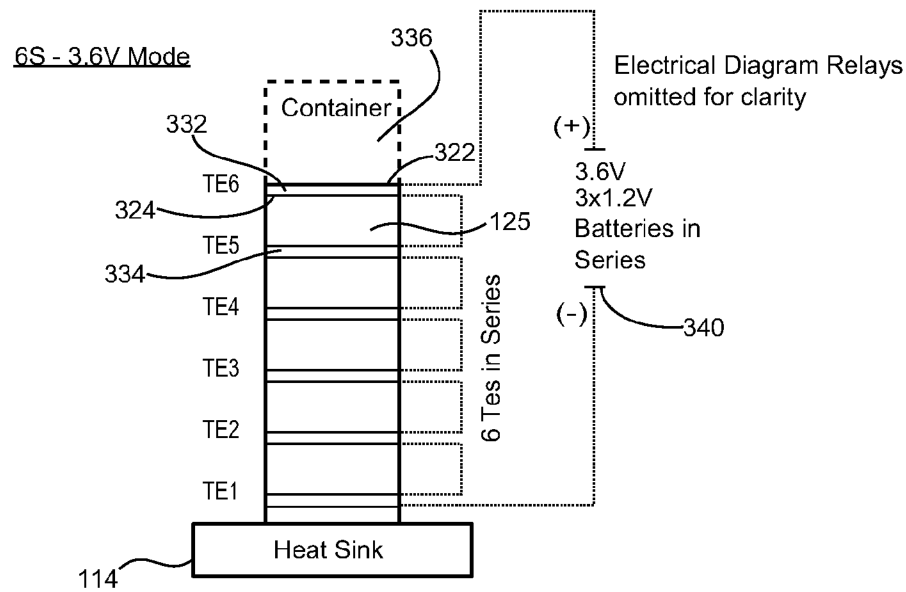


FIG. 20A

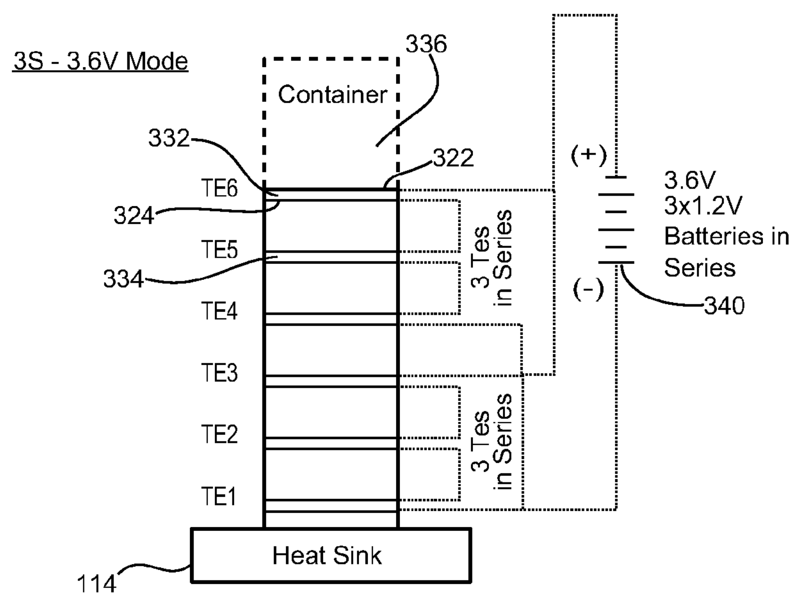


FIG. 20B

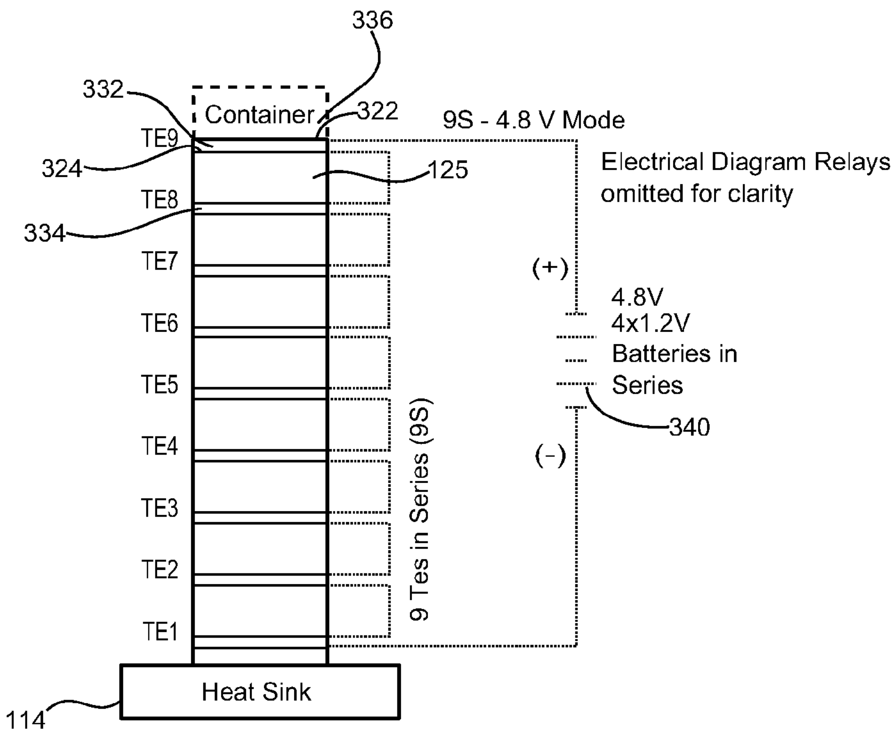


FIG. 21A

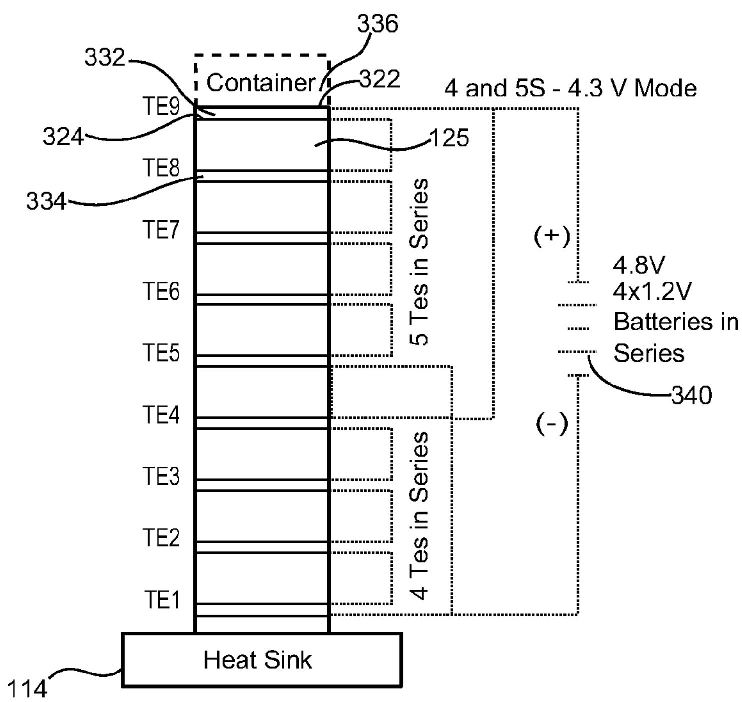


FIG. 21B

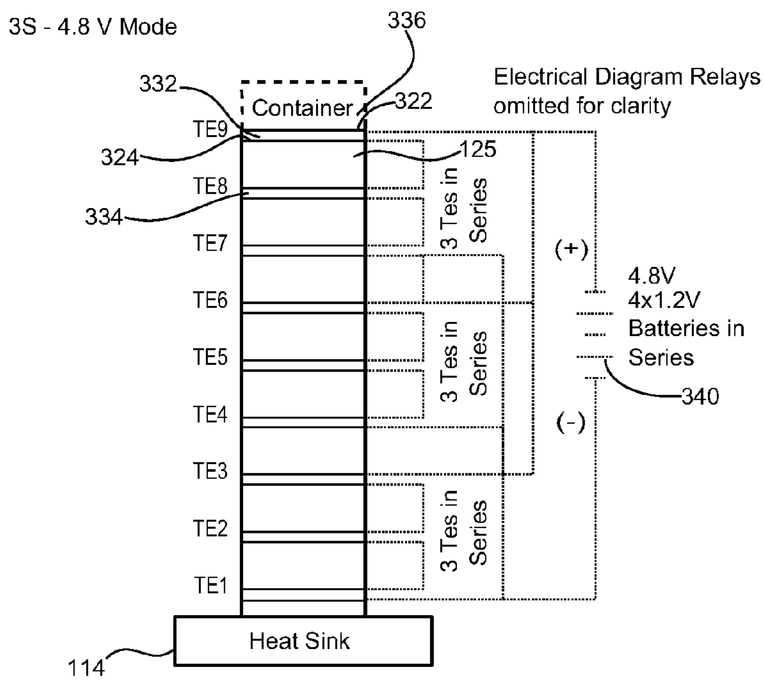


FIG. 22A

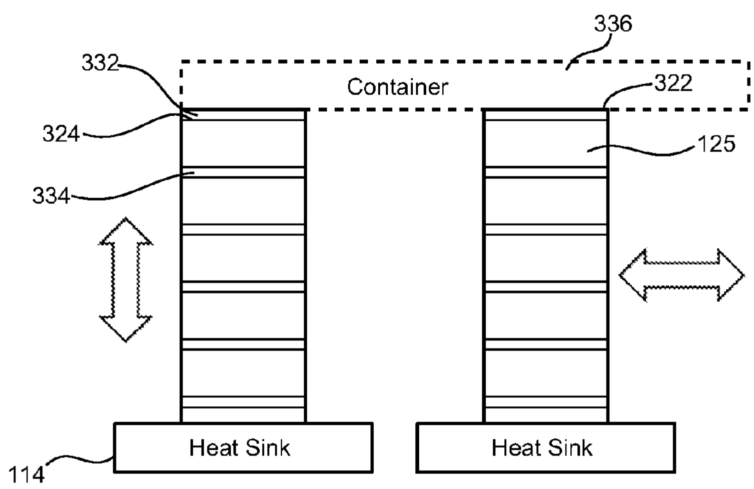


FIG. 22B

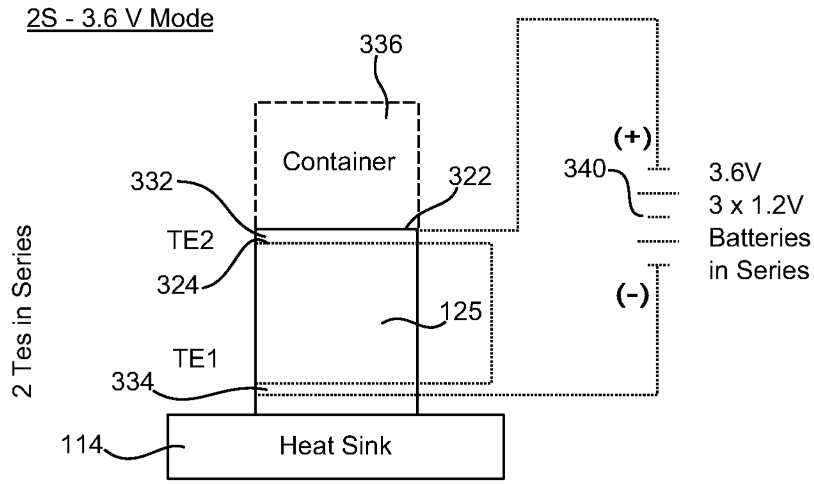


FIG. 23A

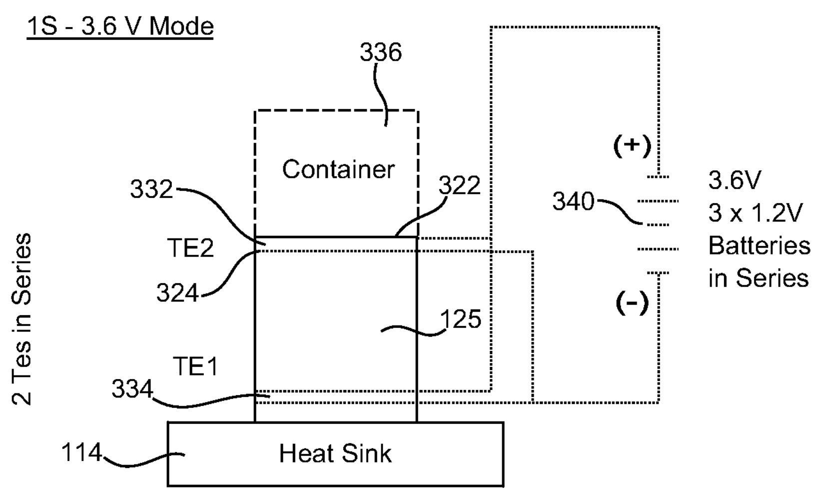


FIG. 23B

I max	DT max	Q	Delta T	V	I	Wmax	DW/Dtmax	Couples		DW/Dtmax / Wmax	SL DW/Dtmax / MQ Wmax
2.1	67	0	40	5.53	0.57	0.271	0.597	127	Single layer	2.20	3.80
2.1	67	0	40	3.10	0.57	0.271	0.597	71	Single layer	2.20	3.80
2.1	67	0	40	2.75	0.57	0.271	0.597	63	Single layer	2.20	3.80
2.1	67	0	40	1.35	0.57	0.271	0.597	31	Single layer	2.20	3.80
2.1	67	0	40	0.75	0.57	0.271	0.597	17	Single layer	2.20	3.80
2.1	67	0	40	0.31	0.57	0.271	0.597	7	Single layer	2.20	3.80
2.1	67	0	24	3.16	0.33	0.157	0.358	127	Micro Q	2.28	2.28
2.1	67	0	28	2.60	0.27	0.129	0.299	127	Single layer	2.32	3.92
2.1	67	0	28	1.46	0.27	0.129	0.299	71	Single layer	2.32	3.92
2.1	67	0	28	1.29	0.27	0.129	0.299	63	Single layer	2.32	3.92
2.1	67	0	28	0.64	0.27	0.129	0.299	31	Single layer	2.32	3.92
2.1	67	0	28	0.35	0.27	0.129	0.299	17	Single layer	2.32	3.92
2.1	67	0	28	0.14	0.27	0.129	0.299	7	Single layer	2.32	3.92
2.1	67	0	12	1.53	0.16	0.076	0.179	127	Micro Q	2.35	2.35
2.1	67	0	10	1.27	0.14	0.067	0.149	127	Single layer	2.24	3.92
2.1	67	0	10	0.71	0.14	0.067	0.149	71	Single layer	2.24	3.92
2.1	67	0	10	0.63	0.14	0.067	0.149	63	Single layer	2.24	3.92
2.1	67	0	10	0.31	0.14	0.067	0.149	31	Single layer	2.24	3.92
2.1	67	0	10	0.17	0.14	0.067	0.149	17	Single layer	2.24	3.92
2.1	67	0	10	0.07	0.14	0.067	0.149	7	Single layer	2.24	3.92
2.1	67	0	6	0.77	0.08	0.038	0.090	127	Micro Q	2.35	2.35
Control T	Cap T	Dt	V	I	Qc	Wmax	DW/Dtmax	Qh	1S Mode		
-12.7	10.9	23.6	3.7	0.48	1.08	0.219	0.352	2.78	Cold layer		
10.6	26.4	15.8	3.7	0.47	3.42	0.224	0.236	5.18	Hot layer		
		39.4									
Control T	Cap T	Dt	V	I	Qc	Wmax	DW/Dtmax	Qh	2S Mode		
3	15.1	12.1	1.84	0.21	0.68	0.100	0.181	1.07	Cold layer		
14.9	23.7	8.8	1.84	0.23	1.65	0.110	0.131	2.07	Hot layer		
		20.9									

FIG. 24A

I max	DT max	Q	Delta T	V	I	I/Imax	Dt/Dtmax	Couples	
2.1	67	1	40	6.12	0.66	0.314	0.597	127	Single layer
2.1	67	1	40	3.70	0.74	0.352	0.597	71	Single layer
2.1	67	1	40	3.36	0.77	0.367	0.597	63	Single layer
2.1	67	1	40	2.03	1.02	0.486	0.597	31	Single layer
2.1	67	1	40	1.60	1.61	0.767	0.597	17	Single layer
2.1	67	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7	Single layer
2.1	67	1	24	3.66	0.42	0.200	0.358	127	Micro Q top layer
2.1	67	0.5	20	2.83	0.31	0.148	0.299	127	Single layer
2.1	67	0.5	20	1.70	0.35	0.167	0.299	71	Single layer
2.1	67	0.5	20	1.63	0.36	0.171	0.299	63	Single layer
2.1	67	0.5	20	0.89	0.45	0.214	0.299	31	Single layer
2.1	67	0.5	20	0.61	0.61	0.290	0.299	17	Single layer
2.1	67	0.5	20	0.46	1.26	0.600	0.299	7	Single layer
2.1	67	0.5	12	1.75	0.20	0.095	0.179	127	Micro Q top layer
2.1	67	0.25	10	1.38	0.16	0.076	0.149	127	Single layer
2.1	67	0.25	10	0.82	0.17	0.081	0.149	71	Single layer
2.1	67	0.25	10	0.74	0.17	0.081	0.149	63	Single layer
2.1	67	0.25	10	0.43	0.22	0.105	0.149	31	Single layer
2.1	67	0.25	10	0.29	0.29	0.138	0.149	17	Single layer
2.1	67	0.25	10	0.20	0.55	0.262	0.149	7	Single layer
2.1	67	0.25	6	0.86	0.10	0.048	0.090	127	Micro Q top layer
Control T	Cap T	Dt	V	I	Qc	I/Imax	Dt/Dtmax	Qh	1S Mode
-12.7	10.9	23.6	3.7	0.46	1.08	0.219	0.352	2.78	Top layer
10.6	26.4	15.8	3.7	0.47	3.42	0.224	0.236	5.18	Bottom layer
		39.4							
Control T	Cap T	Dt	V	I	Qc	I/Imax	Dt/Dtmax	Qh	2S Mode
3	15.1	12.1	1.84	0.21	0.68	0.100	0.181	1.07	Top layer
14.9	23.7	8.8	1.84	0.23	1.65	0.110	0.131	2.07	Bottom layer
		20.9							

FIG. 24B

Typical TE operating point at DT 20

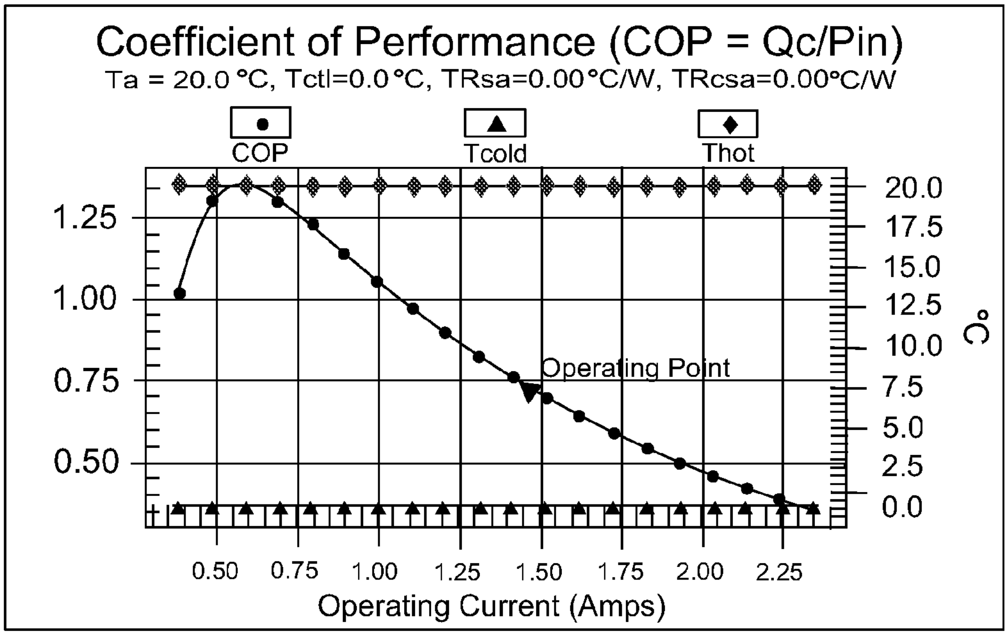


FIG. 25A

Optimum TE operating point at DT 20

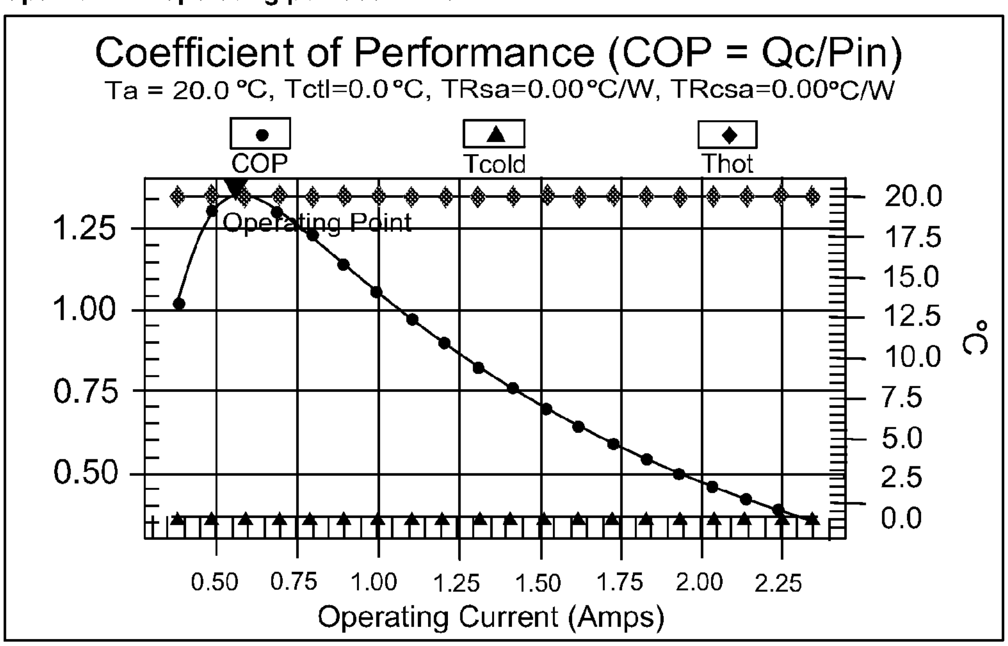


FIG. 25B

Micro Q operating point at DT 20

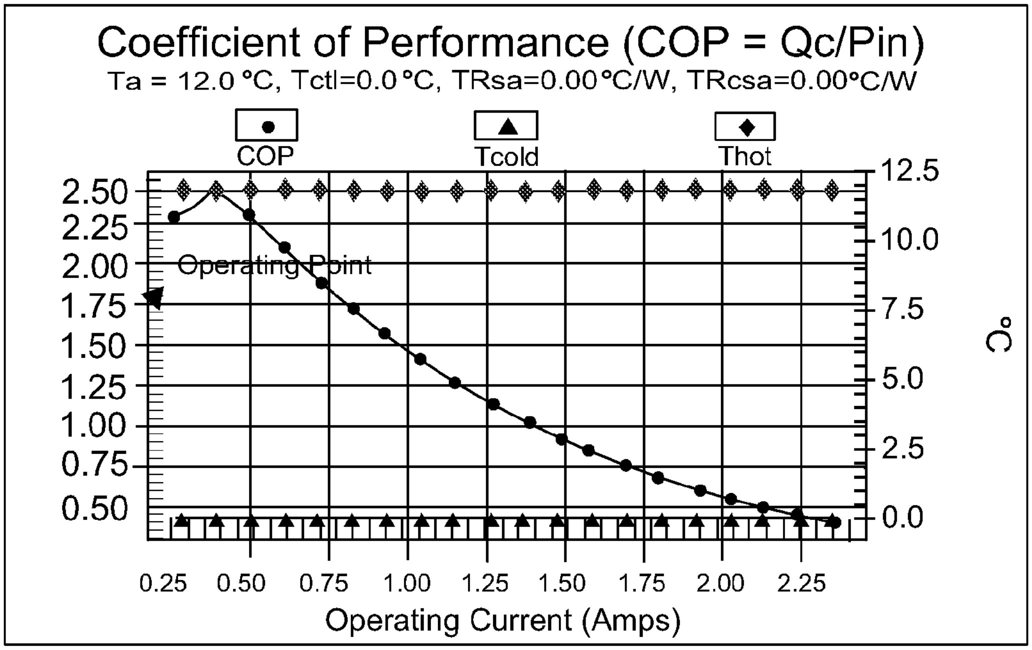


FIG. 25C

Typical TE operating point at DT 40

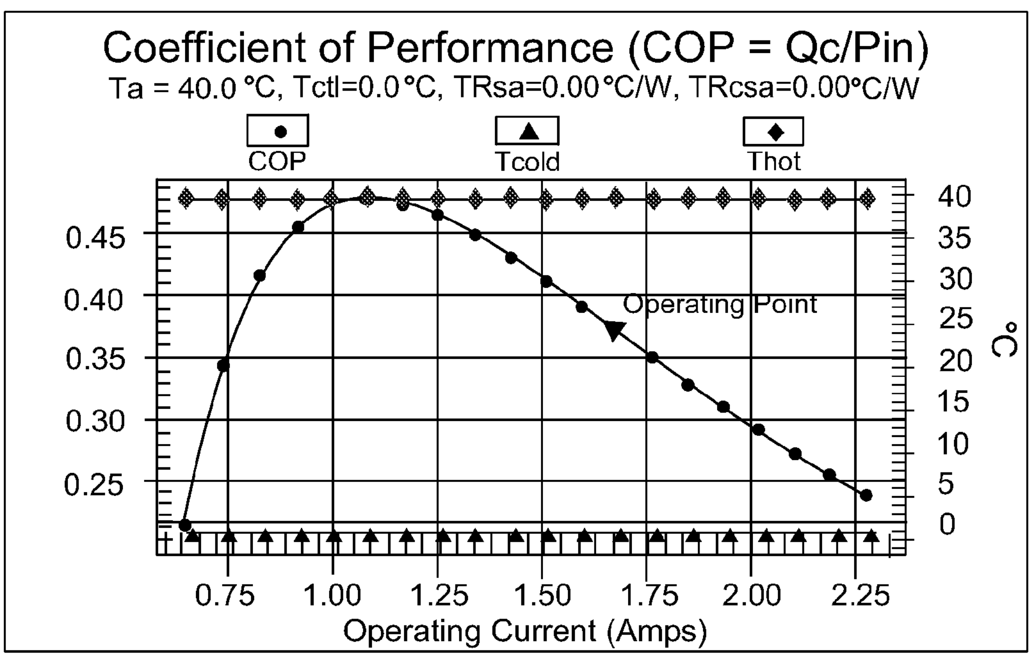


FIG. 26A

Optimum TE operating point at DT 40

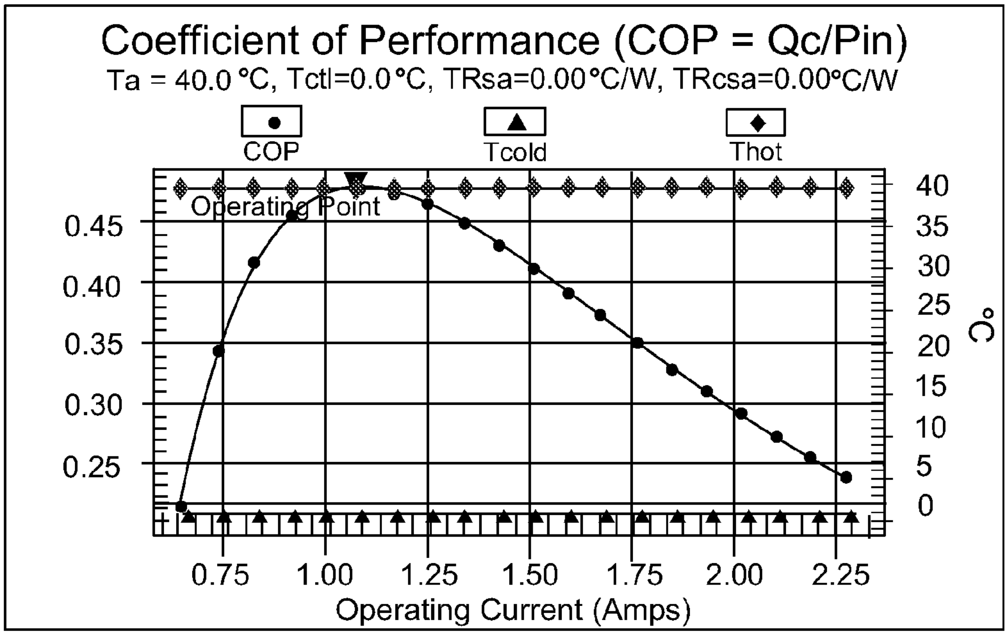


FIG. 26B

Micro Q operating point at DT 40

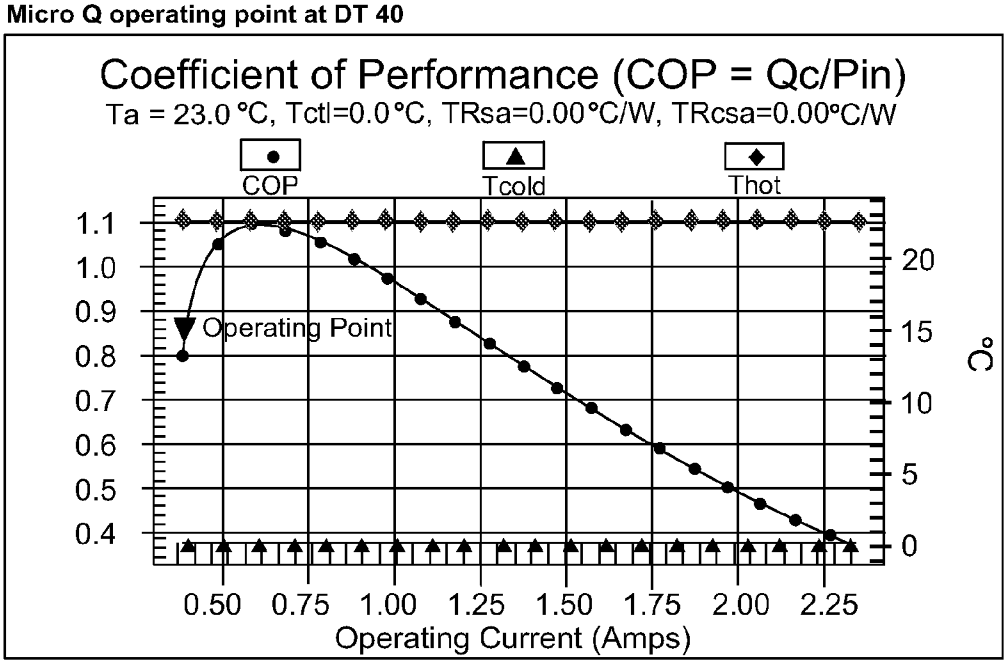


FIG. 26C

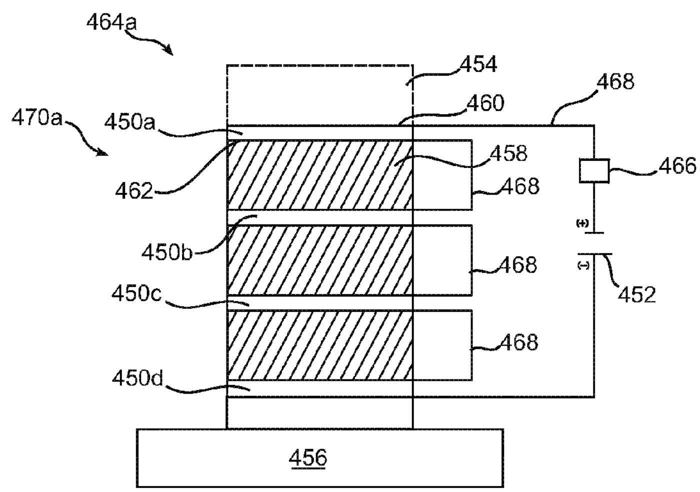


FIG. 27A

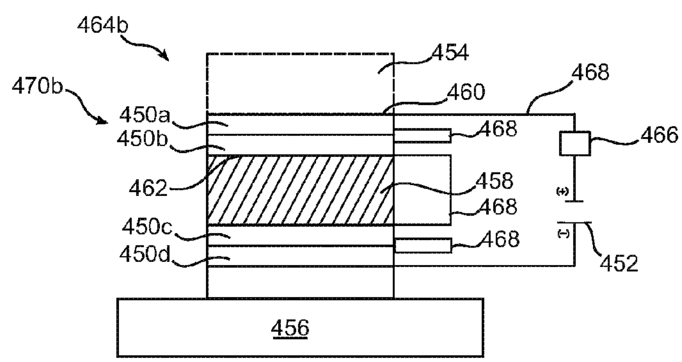


FIG. 27B

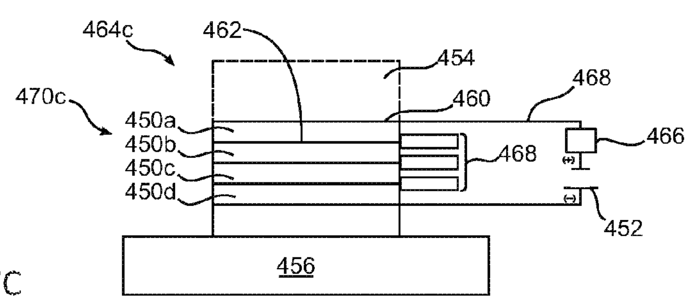


FIG. 27C

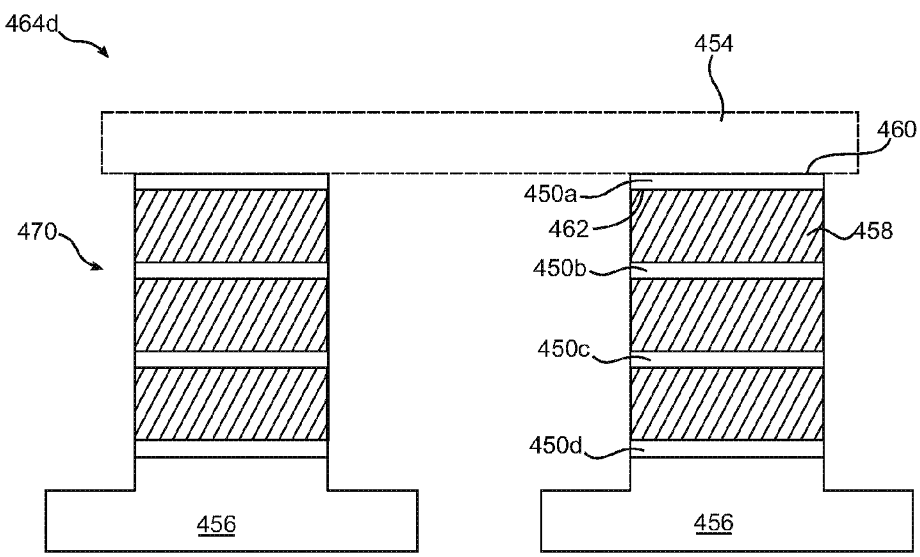
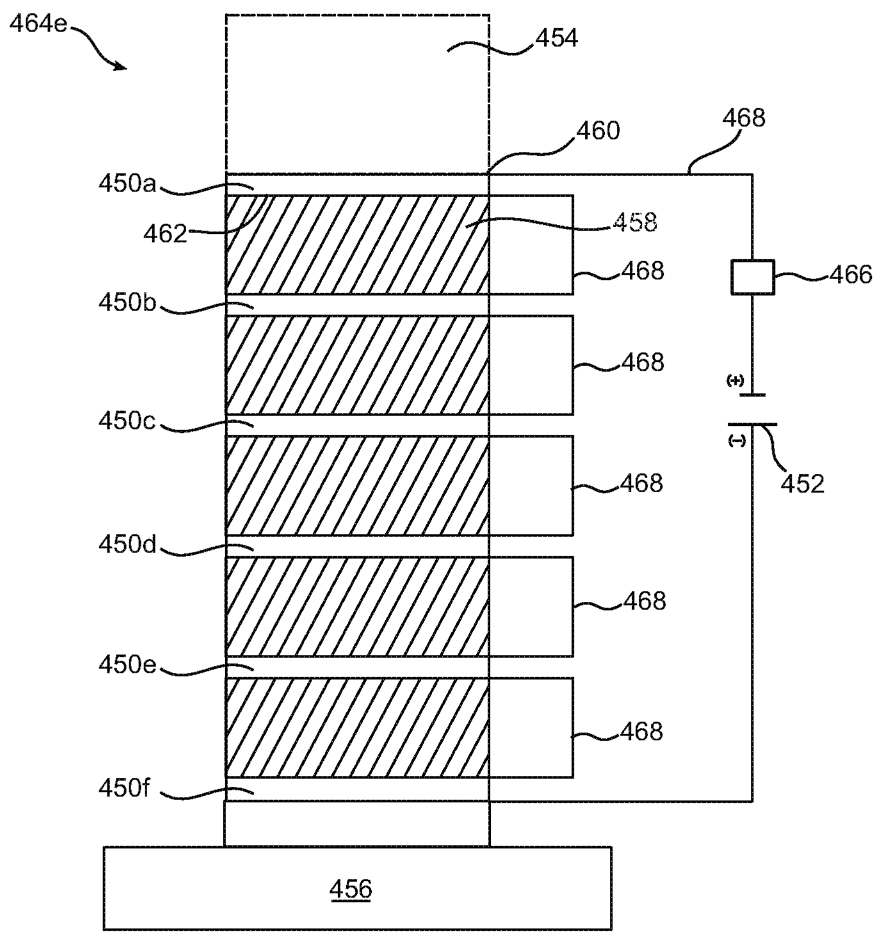


FIG. 28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460
468
450a
462
458
468
466
450b
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(+)
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452
450c
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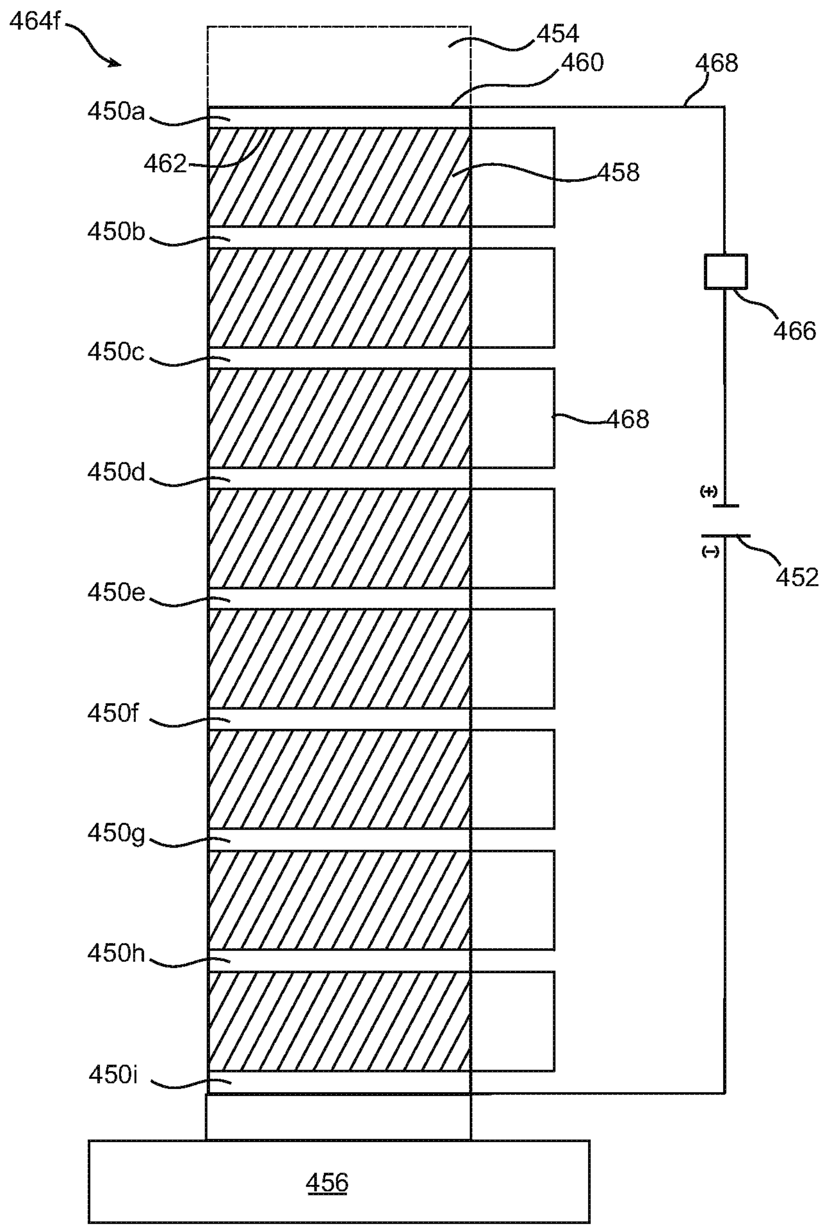
450d
468
450e
468
450f
456

FIG. 29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450c
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450d
(+)
(-)
452
450e
450f
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450h
450i
456

FIG. 30

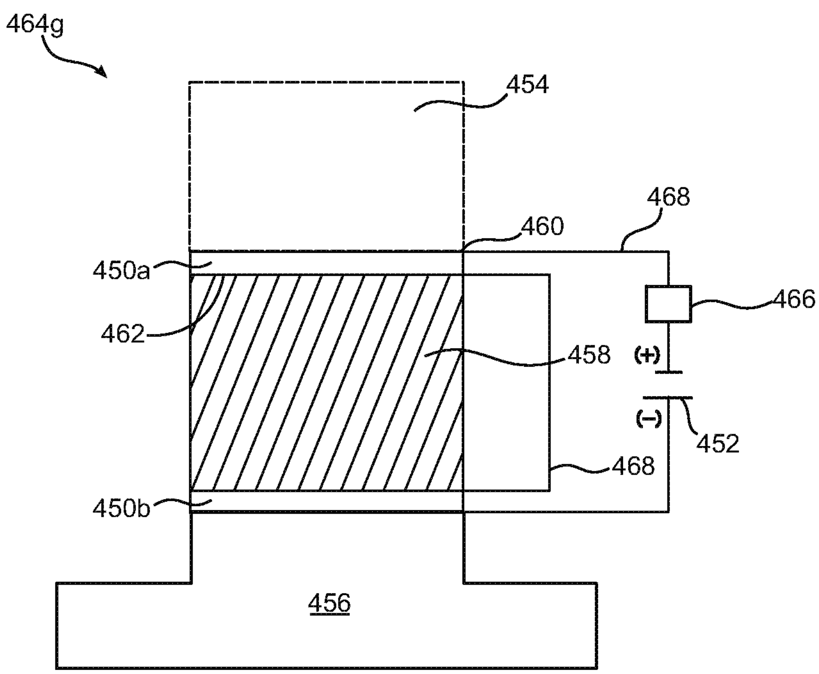

FIG. 31

40 x 40 mm, 127 couples each, 4 Layers of Thermoelectric modules Thermaly and Electrically in Series Consuming 1 Watt of Power

Layer	Cold side	Hot side	Delta T	Voltage (V)	Current (I)	Qc	COP	I / Imax	Dt / Dtmax
(Canister) Layer1 Temperatures	1.4	7.7	6.3	1.1210	0.228	1.11	4.79	0.0648	0.0957
Layer 2 Temperatures	7.7	13.6	5.9	1.1235	0.228	1.29	5.65	0.0648	0.0896
Layer 3 Temperatures	13.6	19.1	5.5	1.1269	0.228	1.47	6.48	0.0648	0.0835
(Heat Sink) Layer 4 Temperatures	19.1	23.5	4.4	1.1198	0.228	1.94	8.24	0.0648	0.0668
Heat Pump Overall Output			22.1	4.4912	0.228	1.11	1.08	0.0648	

Heat Pump Specifications	
Layers	4
Electrical configuration	4 in Series
Total Supplied voltage (Volt)	4.5
Total Measured Current (Amp)	0.228
Total Supplied Power (W)	1.026
Thermolectric Module Specifications	
Size (mm)	40 x 40
Number of Couples	127
Power (Q max) Delta T =0 (Watts)	26.88
Delta T Max @ Qc =0 (Celcius)	65.83
V max (Volts)	15.3
I max (Amperes)	3.52

FIG. 32A

40 x 40 mm, 127 couples each, 4 Layers of Thermoelectric modules Thermaly and Electrically in Series Consuming 3 Watts of Power

Layer	Cold side	Hot side	Delta T	Voltage (V)	Current (I)	Qc	COP	I / Imax	Dt / Dtmax
(Canister) Layer1 Temperatures	-7.3	3.1	10.4	1.8894	0.402	1.77	2.59	0.1142	0.1580
Layer 2 Temperatures	3.1	12.5	9.4	1.9038	0.402	2.30	3.36	0.1142	0.1428
Layer 3 Temperatures	12.5	20.1	7.6	1.9016	0.402	3.08	4.45	0.1142	0.1154
(Heat Sink) Layer 4 Temperatures	20.1	25.4	5.3	1.8637	0.402	3.93	5.71	0.1142	0.0805
Heat Pump Overall Output			32.7	7.5585	0.402	1.77	0.58	0.1142	

Heat Pump Specifications	
Layers	4
Electrical configuration	4 in Series
Total Supplied voltage (Volt)	7.58
Total Measured Current (Amp)	0.402
Total Supplied Power (W)	3.05

Thermolectric Module Specifications	
Size (mm)	40 x 40
Number of Couples	127
Power (Q max) Delta T =0 (Watts)	26.88
Delta T Max @ Qc =0 (Celcius)	65.83
V max (Volts)	15.3
I max (Amperes)	3.52

FIG. 32B

40 x 40 mm, 127 couples each, 4 Layers of Thermoelectric modules Thermaly and Electrically in Series Consuming 5 Watts of Power

Layer	Cold side	Hot side	Delta T	Voltage (V)	Current (I)	Qc	COP	I / Imax	Dt / Dtmax
(Canister) Layer1 Temperatures	-12.6	0.7	13.3	2.3999	0.526	2.10	1.84	0.1494	0.2020
Layer 2 Temperatures	0.7	12.1	11.4	2.4248	0.526	3.00	2.68	0.1494	0.1732
Layer 3 Temperatures	12.1	20.4	8.3	2.4097	0.526	4.32	3.78	0.1494	0.1261
(Heat Sink) Layer 4 Temperatures	20.4	25.1	4.7	2.3260	0.526	5.59	4.98	0.1494	0.0714
Heat Pump Overall Output			37.7	9.5604	0.526	2.10	0.42	0.1494	

Heat Pump Specifications	
Layers	4
Electrical configuration	4 in Series
Total Supplied voltage (Volt)	9.59
Total Measured Current (Amp)	0.526
Total Supplied Power (W)	5.04

Thermolectric Module Specifications	
Size (mm)	40 x 40
Number of Couples	127
Power (Q max) Delta T =0 (Watts)	26.88
Delta T Max @ Qc =0 (Celcius)	65.83
V max (Volts)	15.3
I max (Amperes)	3.52

FIG. 32C

THERMO-ELECTRIC HEAT PUMP SYSTEMS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is related to and claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/805,926 filed Mar. 27, 2013 and is also a continuation-in-part application of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/176,078, titled "Thermo-Electric Heat Pump Systems," filed Feb. 8, 2014, which is a continuation application of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/146,635, titled "Thermo-Electric Heat Pump Systems," filed Feb. 8, 2012 (issued as U.S. Pat. No. 8,646,282), which is the U.S. National Stage of PCT/US2010/022459, filed Jan. 28, 2010, entitled "Thermo-Electric Heat Pump Systems", which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/361,484 filed Jan. 28, 2009, entitled "Thermo-Electric Heat Pump Systems" (issued as U.S. Pat. No. 8,677,767); U.S. National Stage of PCT/US2010/022459 also claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/148,911 filed Jan. 30, 2009, entitled "Thermo-Electric Heat Pump Systems," the contents of each of the above applications which are incorporated herein by reference thereto in their entireties.

BACKGROUND

This disclosure relates to thermo-electric heat pump systems. In another aspect, this disclosure relates to providing a system for improved iso-thermal transport and storage systems. More particularly, this disclosure relates to providing a system for temperature regulation for transported materials requiring a stable thermal environment. There is a need for a robust shock-proof and efficient thermo-electric device that is self-sufficient and does not require external power for a period of multiple days. Further, there is a need for a thermo-electric device that is capable of safely storing and maintaining its cargo during transport and/or storage. The need has been expressed by those involved in transportation and storage of temperature sensitive and delicate goods, for example, biological or laboratory samples. Additionally, this need is further expressed by those responsible for transporting sensitive goods in extreme locations where temperature regulation may be problematic. Furthermore, a need exists for an iso-thermal storage and transport system that self-regulates temperature over pre-defined, adjustable cooling or heating profiles. Shipping weight and volume are also prime concerns.

A need exists for an iso-thermal storage and transport system that provides a self-contained means for storing energy onboard during the transport and storage of sensitive goods, such as biological materials and samples, including cell and tissue cultures, nucleic acids, bodily fluids, tissues, organs, embryos, semen, stem-cells, ovaries, platelets, blood, plant tissues, and other sensitive goods such as pharmaceuticals, vaccines and chemicals. In light of available utilities, external ambient temperature, environmental conditions and other factors, it is essential that an iso-thermal storage and transport system function reliably to protect sensitive goods from degradation.

A need exists for an iso-thermal storage and transport system that is robust and that provides a shock-proof system that withstands abuses and rough handling inherent within storage and transportation of sensitive goods.

Further, needs exist for iso-thermal storage and transport systems and other related thermo-electric heat pump systems that are reusable, reliable over an extended time period, cost-effective and dependable.

SUMMARY

The present disclosure is directed to a thermoelectric heat pump assembly having a more efficient design. As used herein, Temperature (T) is in Celsius; Voltage (V) is in Volts; current (I) is in Amps; heat (Q) is in Watts; and resistance R is in Ohms. The heat pump assembly designs described herein increases heat pump per unit of input power during overall use, with increased reliability. In an embodiment the thermoelectric heat pump assembly comprises: two or more thermoelectric unit layers (i.e., thermoelectric modules) capable of active use of the Peltier effect, each thermoelectric unit layer having a cold side and a hot side, and at least one capacitance spacer block suitable for storing heat and providing a delayed thermal reaction time of the assembly.

The heat pump assembly of the disclosure can be configured so that each thermoelectric unit layer at steady-state during operation has ratio or coefficient of performance (COP) of the heat removed divided by the input power that is prior to and less than the peak COP on a COP curve of performance (See FIGS. **25**A-**25**C and FIGS. **26**A-**26**C). The capacitance spacer block has a top portion and a bottom portion and is between a first thermoelectric unit layer and a second thermoelectric layer. The top portion of the capacitance spacer block is thermally connected to the hot side of the first thermoelectric unit layer and the bottom portion is thermally connected to the cold side of the second thermoelectric unit layer, forming a sandwich layer suitable to pump heat from the first thermoelectric unit layer to the second thermoelectric layer. The capacitance spacer block can be made of copper, aluminum, or other thermally conductive and capacitive alloys.

Each thermoelectric unit layer can comprise thermoelectric units electrically connected in parallel or series, but thermally connected in series. Each thermoelectric unit layers in the heat pump assembly can be separated by a capacitance spacer block. In some configurations, the thermoelectric heat pump of the disclosure would have two to nine thermoelectric unit layers (e.g., 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). The thermoelectric unit layers are can be electrically reconfigurably connected to maintain a given temperature profile over time by switching between different configurations, e.g., electrically reconfigurable between series and parallel configurations.

At least one energy source (e.g., battery) is operably connected to each thermoelectric unit layer, wherein the energy source is suitable to provide a current to power the thermoelectric heat pump and to control the amount of heat removed by the heat pump. In certain aspects, the heat pump assembly comprises two or more energy sources (e.g., 3, 4, 5) that can be used as back up or provide alternative current configurations.

Advantageously, the heat pump assembly typically also has a heat sink associated with a fan assembly, wherein in the heat sink is thermally connected at the bottom end of the heat pump assembly. In certain aspects, the heat sink can be at least 30 W, or at least 40 W (e.g., 45 W, or 50 W).

In one aspect, the heat pump assembly is configured so that each individual thermoelectric unit layer has a ratio of input current to maximum available current (I/Imax) of 0.35 at steady-state. The heat pump assembly can also be configured so that the I/Imax of 0.09 or less (e.g. 0.076) at a steady-state, when change in temperature (ΔT) of the heat pump assembly at the top end compared to the bottom end of the heat pump assembly is about 20° C. and heat removal (Q) is about 0 Watts; and/or the ratio of input current to maximum available current (I/Imax) of each individual thermoelectric unit layer is 0.18 or less at a steady-state, when change in temperature

(ΔT) of the heat pump assembly at the top end compared to the bottom end of the heat pump assembly is about 40° C. and heat (Q) is about 0 Watts.

In another aspect, the heat pump assembly is configured so that each individual thermoelectric unit layer has a maximum change in temperature (ΔT_{max}) potential and comprises at least 127 coupled pairs of thermoelectric units, and wherein the heat pump assembly is configured so that each thermoelectric layer operates at: (i) less than 20% of the ΔT_{max} at steady-state when change in temperature (ΔT) of the heat pump assembly at the top end compared to the bottom end of the heat pump assembly is about 20° C.; and/or (ii) less than 40% of the ΔT_{max} at steady-state when change in temperature (ΔT) of the heat pump assembly at the top end compared to the bottom end of the heat pump assembly is about 40° C.

In another aspect, the heat pump assembly further comprises a heat sink associated with a fan assembly, wherein in the heat sink is thermally connected at the bottom end of the heat pump assembly, the heat pump assembly being configured to minimize a temperature rise or drop on the heat sink at a steady-state so that the temperature rise or drop on the heat sink does not exceed 5° C., or does not exceed 4° C. or 3° C., and even 2.5° C., typically as compared to ambient temperature.

In a configuration, the thermoelectric heat pump assembly is configured so that at steady-state the heat sink has a temperature that does not exceed 30%, 25% or 20%, of the heat sink maximum temperature rating, wherein the heat sink has a rating of at least 35 Watts (e.g., 40 Watts).

Each thermoelectric unit layer can comprise at least 127 coupled pairs of thermoelectric units. Also, each thermoelectric unit layer can be configured at 3 or more Ohms at 25° Celsius, or 5 or more Ohms, (e.g. about 5.5, 6.0, or 6.5 Ohms), typically not greater than 7.5 Ohms. The thermoelectric unit layer (i.e., a thermoelectric module) can have a heat pumping capability of between 15 Watts and 20 Watts.

Each thermoelectric unit layer can have a maximum change in temperature (ΔT_{max}) potential and is configured so that each thermoelectric layer operates at less than 20% of the ΔT_{max} at steady-state when change in temperature (ΔT) of the heat pump assembly at the top end compared to the bottom end of the heat pump assembly is 20° C.; and/or operates at less than 40% of the ΔT_{max} at steady-state when change in temperature (ΔT) of the heat pump assembly at the top end compared to the bottom end of the heat pump assembly is 40° C.

In addition, the capacitance spacer block can typically separate the thermoelectric unit layers by at least ¼ inch, or at least about ½, 1, 2, or 3 inches. In a specific embodiment, the capacitance spacer block, is about 1.5-2.5 inches. The top portion and bottom portion of the capacitance spacer block can be substantially the same size and shape as the cold side and hot side of each thermoelectric unit layer to obtain substantial contact with the thermoelectric unit layer.

The thermoelectric heat pump assembly of the present disclosure may further comprise momentary relay based circuitry, programmable by a portable microprocessor adapted to control the temperature of the temperature sensitive goods based on a given temperature profile. In an embodiment of the disclosure, the thermoelectric heat pump assembly further comprises a microcontroller (e.g., microprocessor) operatively associated with the energy source and at least one relay, wherein the microcontroller activates the at least one relay which directs current from the energy source to at least one of the thermoelectric unit layers and wherein the at least one relay reconnects the at least one thermoelectric unit layer in series or parallel with another thermoelectric unit layer.

For example, the microcontroller: (1) defines a setpoint temperature (Tsp) and compares the Tsp to a temperature (Tc) of a container operatively associated with the thermoelectric heat pump assembly, wherein the microcontroller controls at least one relay to connect the at least one thermoelectric unit layer in series if Tc checks positive or equal against Tsp, and wherein the microcontroller deactivates the at least one relay if Tsp checks negative or equal against Tc; (2) defines a Tsp and compares the Tsp to Tc of a container operatively associated with the thermoelectric heat pump assembly, wherein the microcontroller activates the at least one relay to connect the at least one thermoelectric unit layer in parallel if Tc checks positive or equal against Tsp, and wherein the microcontroller deactivates the at least one relay if Tsp checks negative or equal against Tc; and/or (3) defines a Tsp and compares the Tsp to a Tc of a container operatively associated with the thermoelectric heat pump assembly, wherein the microcontroller activates the at least one relay to connect the at least one thermoelectric unit layer in parallel and the microcontroller activates the at least one relay to connect the at least one thermoelectric unit layer in series if Tsp checks positive or equal against Tc, and wherein the microcontroller deactivates the at least one relay if Tsp checks negative or equal against Tc. In a specific example, the Tc would check positive or equal if the Tc is greater than the Tsp plus 1° C., or 0.5° C., or 0.1° C.

The disclosure is further directed to a thermoelectric transport or storage device for thermally protecting temperature sensitive goods during transport. The thermoelectric transport and storage device can be configured so that it self-regulates temperature over pre-defined, adjustable cooling or heating profile. Advantageously, the device comprises a thermal isolation chamber for storing the temperature sensitive goods and at least one thermoelectric heat pump assembly, as described herein, thermally connected to the thermal isolation chamber and configured to control a temperature of the temperature sensitive goods during transport or storage at a selected steady-state temperature within a tolerable temperature variation for the temperature sensitive goods being transported or stored. The thermal isolation chamber can be made of thermally conductive metals and alloys, e.g., aluminum.

Non-limiting examples of temperature sensitive goods suitable for transport in the device include: semen, embryos, oocytes, cell cultures, tissue cultures, chondrocytes, nucleic acids, bodily fluids, organs, plant tissues, pharmaceuticals, vaccines, and temperature sensitive chemicals. In an embodiment the thermoelectric transport or storage device also has a robust shock proof exterior, capable of protecting sensitive goods during long periods of transport and storage.

In certain aspects of the disclosure, the transport or storage device typically also has a portable microprocessor, wherein the portable microprocessor is programmed to communicate with the thermoelectric transport or storage device upon activation. In addition, the device may also advantageously have an electrical-erasable-programmable read-only-memory (EEPROM) chip operatively associated with the thermoelectric transport or storage device. The EEPROM chip communicates with the portable microprocessor and the thermoelectric heat pump. The portable microprocessor also typically communicates with the EEPROM chip through a multi-master serial computer bus using I2C protocol and can store received time and temperature profiles related to the thermoelectric heat pump assembly.

In one exemplary configuration, the portable microprocessor communicates time and temperature profiles related to the thermoelectric heat pump to the EEPROM and also receives time and temperature profiles related to the thermoelectric heat pump from the EEPROM. The portable microprocessor can store the received time and temperature profiles related to the thermoelectric heat pump. Also, the portable microprocessor can be operatively associated with the thermoelectric transport or storage device through one or more DB connectors. In this exemplary embodiment, the portable microprocessor is often advantageously activated by the energy source of the thermoelectric transport or storage device.

The thermoelectric transport or storage device described herein, can also comprise reconfigurable circuitry suitable for a selected temperature input. In this embodiment, the thermoelectric unit layers are electrically reconfigurable to maintain a temperature profile during transport or storage. Typically, the circuitry comprises a programmable microprocessor programmed to actuate a temperature sensitive goods specific temperature profile.

The thermoelectric transport or storage device can also have at least one rotator structured and arranged to rotate the temperature sensitive goods within the thermal isolation chamber. This facilitates a uniform temperature of the goods during transport and enhances the effectiveness of maintaining the desired temperature.

The thermoelectric transport or storage device can also be configured to configured to control the temperature of the temperature sensitive goods within a selected tolerance for a specific temperature sensitive good, for example, a tolerance of less than about 10° C., less than: 8° C.; 5° C.; and/or 3° C.; and even less than: 1° C., 0.5° C. and/or 0.1° C.

Another aspect is the ability to program the thermoelectric transport or storage device with unique specific profiles suitable for the specific goods being transported and the needs of the users. For example, the device can be programmed to ship reproductive fluids at a selected and desired temperature to best preserve the fluids using very low tolerance variability levels of 0.1° C., until delivery, at which the device would be programmed to increase to a second selected and desired the temperature for clinical use.

Also with extremely sensitive temperature goods it is important to have a ramp down and/or ramp down period so as not to harm the goods due to a rapid change in temperature. To ramp down/up the temperature, the device can be programmed or configured to gradually increase or decrease the temperature over a set time period. For example, the device could be programmed to decrease/increase the temperature by 0.1 degrees every 20 minutes, down to a selected temperature. Thus, as can be seen, the device of the disclosure provides the user with the ability to specifically program the device with not just one profile, but with several temperature profiles (or sub-profiles), e.g., 3, 4, 5, etc. in accordance with parameters of the goods to be stored or transported. The activation of sub-profiles allows for increased flexibility in best protecting the specific temperature sensitive goods during transport.

The thermoelectric transport or storage device advantageously has at least one portable energy source, e.g. at least one, two, or three batteries, which is suitable to maintain the selected temperature for the temperature sensitive goods during transport of at least 72 hours, or at least 84 hours, and even 7 days, the selected temperature of the temperature sensitive goods compared to ambient temperature is at least 20° C., at least 30° C. or at least 40° C. Multiple batteries can be used to provide the necessary energy source.

Another aspect is the insulation. The insulation can be one or more vacuum insulators insulating the thermal isolation chamber. Vacuum insulators comprise at least one layer of reflective material having infrared emittance, in the infrared spectrum from about one micron to about one millimeter wavelength, of less than about 0.1. The vacuum insulators can also comprise at least one evacuated volume having an absolute pressure of less than about 10 Torr.

The thermoelectric transport or storage devices described herein can come in many sizes and shapes, e.g., 1'×2; 4'×4', etc. As the sizes of the transport or storage device increase it can be that at least 2 thermoelectric heat pumps be incorporated therein (4, 8, 10, 15, etc.). The heat pumps can be reconfigurably connected between series and parallel configurations. Furthermore, the thermoelectric unit layers of each heat pump can also be reconfigurably connected between series and parallel providing greater control over the amount of heat generation of each thermoelectric unit layer and the heat pump in general.

The disclosure is also directed to a method of safely transporting temperature sensitive goods at a selected temperature profile during transport. The method can comprise the steps of:

(a) placing the temperature sensitive goods in a transportation device adapted to thermally isolate the temperature sensitive goods from outside environment, wherein the transportation device comprises at least one temperature control system adapted to actuate the selected temperature profile while the temperature sensitive goods are in the transportation device, the temperature control system comprising at least one thermoelectric heat pump as described above in thermal association with the temperature sensitive goods being transported; and

(b) transporting the temperature sensitive goods while the transportation device is activated according to the selected temperature profile.

In certain embodiments, the disclosure further comprises loading a user-selected temperature profile specific to the temperature sensitive goods being transported by inserting a smart chip into a communication link, wherein the smart chip downloads the profile into the transport device.

In accordance with a other embodiments hereof, a thermal protection system, relating to thermally protecting temperature sensitive goods, comprising: at least one thermo-electric heat pump adapted to control at least one temperature of the temperature sensitive goods; wherein such at least one thermo-electric heat pump comprises at least one thermo-electric device adapted to active use of the Peltier effect; wherein such at least one thermo-electric heat pump comprises at least one thermal capacitor adapted to provide at least one thermal capacitance in thermal association with such at least one thermo-electric device; and wherein such at least one thermal capacitance is user-selected to provide intended thermal association with such at least one thermo-electric device, and wherein such at least one thermal capacitance can be embodied by a capacitance spacer block made of, for example, aluminum, copper, or other thermally conductive and capacitive alloys. Moreover, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such intended thermal association of such at least one least one thermal capacitance is user-selected to provide increased energy efficiency of operation of such at least one thermo-electric device as compared to such energy efficiency of operation of such at least one thermo-electric device without addition of such at least one least one thermal capacitor.

Additionally, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such intended thermal association of such at least one thermal capacitance is user-selected to allow usage of momentary-relay-based control circuitry in combination with at least one energy store to power such at least one thermo-electric device to achieve control of at least one temperature of the temperature sensitive goods. Also, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such control of such at least one temperature comprises controlling such at least one temperature to within a tolerance of less than about one degree centigrade. In addition, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such intended thermal association is user-selected to control usage of proportional control circuitry in combination with at least one energy store to power such at least one thermo-electric heat pump to control such at least one temperature of the temperature sensitive goods. And, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such control of such at least one temperature comprises controlling such at least one temperature to within a tolerance of less than one degree centigrade. Further, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one thermo-electric heat pump comprises a minimum of one sandwich layer; wherein such sandwich layer comprises at least one set of such thermo-electric devices and at least one set of such thermal capacitors; wherein each such sandwich layer is suitable for thermally-conductively connecting to at least one other such sandwich layer; and wherein thermal conductance between essentially all such attached sandwich layers is greater than 10 watts per meter per degree centigrade.

Even further, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one thermo-electric heat pump comprises at least one such sandwich layer comprising such set of such thermo-electric devices; wherein each thermo-electric device comprising such plurality is electrically connected in parallel with each other each thermo-electric device comprising such plurality; and wherein each set of such thermo-electric devices comprising such first sandwich layer is suitable for thermally-conductively connecting to at least one other such sandwich layer; and wherein thermal conductance between essentially all such attached sandwich layers is greater than 10 watts per meter per degree centigrade.

Moreover, it provides such a thermal protection system further comprising: at least one thermal isolator for thermally isolating the temperature sensitive goods. Additionally, it provides such a thermal protection system: at least one thermal isolator for thermally isolating the temperature sensitive goods, wherein such at least one thermal isolator comprises at least one vessel structured and arranged to contain the temperature sensitive goods; and wherein such at least one vessel comprises at least one heat-transferring surface structured and arranged to conductively exchange heat to and from such at least one temperature controller.

Also, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one vessel comprises at least one re-sealable surface structured and arranged to ingress and egress the temperature sensitive goods to and from such at least one thermal isolator. In addition, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one re-sealable surface comprises at least one seal structured and arranged to exclude at least one microorganism from such at least one vessel. And, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one thermal isolator comprises at least one insulator for insulating the temperature sensitive goods. Further, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one insulator comprises at least one layer of reflective material; and wherein infrared emittance of such reflective material is less than about 0.1, in the infrared spectrum from about one micron to about one millimeter wavelength.

Even further, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one insulator comprises at least one evacuated volume; and wherein absolute pressure of such least one evacuated volume is less than about 10 Torr. Moreover, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one thermal isolator comprises at least one goods rotator structured and arranged to rotate the temperature sensitive goods within such at least one thermal isolator. Additionally, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one goods rotator is structured and arranged to self-power from at least one energy storage device.

Also, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one energy storage device comprises at least one battery. In addition, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such thermo-electric heat pump comprises from about two to about nine vessel sandwich layers, each such vessel sandwich layer comprising at least one vessel set of such thermo-electric devices; and wherein such at least one vessel set comprises at least two thermo-electric devices. And, it provides such a thermal protection system: wherein such at least one vessel set comprises at least ten thermo-electric devices.

In accordance with another embodiment, a method is provided relating to use of at least one thermal protection system, relating to thermally protecting temperature sensitive goods, comprising the steps of: delivery, by at least one provider, of such at least one thermal protection system to at least one user, relating to at least one use, relating to at least one time period; wherein such at least one thermal protection system comprises at least one thermo-electric device adapted to active use of the Peltier effect to effect such control of at least one temperature; wherein such at least one thermo-electric device comprises at least one thermal capacitor adapted to provide at least one thermal capacitance in thermal association with such at least one thermo-electric device; and wherein such at least one thermal capacitor is user-selected to provide intended thermal association with such at least one thermo-electric device presetting of at least one set-point temperature of such at least one thermal protection system, by such at least one provider, prior to such delivery; and receiving value from at least one party benefiting from such at least one use. Further, it provides such a method, further comprising: providing re-use of such at least one thermal protection system, by such at least one provider; wherein such step of providing re-use comprises at least one cleaning step, and at least one set-point re-setting step. Even further, it provides such a method, further comprising: permitting other entities, for value, to provide such method.

In accordance with another embodiment hereof, the disclosure provides a method of engineering design of thermo-electric heat pumps, relating to designing toward maximizing heat pumped per unit of input power, comprising the steps of: accumulating at least one desired range of variables for each at least one design-goal element of such thermoelectric heat pump to be designed; discovering such maximum heat pumped per unit of input power; and finalizing such engineering design; wherein such step of discovering such maximum heat pumped per unit of input power comprises providing at least one desired arrangement of a plurality of thermo-electric devices, wherein essentially each thermoelectric device of such plurality of thermo-electric devices is associated with at least one user selectable thermal capacitance, holding each such at least one design-goal element within a respective such at least one desired range of variables, incrementally trial raising each such at least one user selectable thermal capacitance while performing such holding step, and essentially maximizing such at least one user selectable thermal capacitance while remaining within each respective such at least one desired range of variables; wherein at least one essentially maximum heat pumped per unit of input power may be achieved.

In accordance with another embodiment hereof, the disclosure provides a method, applied to shipping perishables: wherein such design-goal elements comprising ambient temperature, shipping container cost, shipping container weight, shipping container size, maximum variation of temperature of perishables required; wherein the shipping container cost, shipping container weight, shipping container size, variation of temperature of perishables are minimized while achieving essentially maximum heat pumped per unit of input power; wherein such shipping container comprises at least one arrangement of a plurality of thermo-electric devices; wherein essentially each thermo-electric device of such plurality of thermo-electric devices is associated with at least one user selectable thermal capacitance; wherein thermal capacitance of each such at least one user selectable thermal capacitance is determined by holding each such at least one design-goal element within a respective such at least one desired range of variables, incrementally trial raising each such at least one user selectable thermal capacitance while performing such holding step, and essentially maximizing such at least one user selectable thermal capacitance while remaining within each respective such at least one desired range of variables; and wherein at least one essentially maximum heat pumped per unit of input power is achieved.

In accordance with another embodiment hereof, the disclosure provides a method, applied to providing temperature conditioning of perishables in recreational vehicles: wherein such design-goal elements comprise ambient temperature, perishable cold storage container cost, perishable cold storage container weight, perishable cold storage container size, maximum variation of temperature of perishables required; wherein the cold storage container cost, perishable cold storage container weight, perishable cold storage container size, variation of temperature of perishables are minimized while achieving essentially maximum heat pumped per unit of input power; wherein such shipping container comprises at least one arrangement of a plurality of thermo-electric devices; wherein essentially each thermo-electric device of such plurality of thermo-electric devices is associated with at least one user selectable thermal capacitance; wherein thermal capacitance of each such at least one user selectable thermal capacitance is determined by holding each such at least one design-goal element within a respective such at least one desired range of variables, incrementally trial raising each such at least one user selectable thermal capacitance while performing such holding step, and essentially maximizing such at least one user selectable thermal capacitance while remaining within each respective such at least one desired range of variables; and wherein at least one essentially maximum heat pumped per unit of input power is achieved.

In accordance with another embodiment hereof, the disclosure provides a method, relating to protectively transporting equine semen, comprising the steps of: providing at least one transportation vessel adapted to seal such horse semen in isolation from outside environment; providing at least one temperature control system adapted to control temperature of the horse semen while in such at least one transportation vessel; and providing that such at least one temperature control system comprises at least one thermoelectric heat pump; wherein such at least one thermo-electric heat pump is adapted to controlling temperature of such horse semen to remain in at least one temperature range assisting viability of such horse semen. Moreover, it provides such a method wherein such at least one thermo-electric heat pump comprises at least one Peltier thermo-electric device in thermal association with at least one thermal capacitor having at least one thermal capacitance designed to provide intended to provide intended operational features of such at least one thermo-electric heat pump.

In accordance with another embodiment, a thermoelectric heat pump assembly may comprise at least three identical thermoelectric units arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured for simultaneous use of the Peltier effect. A thermally capacitive spacer block is disposed between each of the at least three thermoelectric units. An energy source is coupled to the at least three thermoelectric units and configured to provide a current source to each of the serially connected thermoelectric units. A heat sink is coupled to the at least three thermoelectric units and thermally capacitive spacer blocks. A microcontroller is operatively associated with the energy source to direct current from the energy source to the at least three thermoelectric units.

Particular embodiments may comprise one or more of the following features. The microcontroller defines a Tsp and compares the Tsp to a Tc coupled to the thermoelectric heat pump and activates a simultaneous use of the Peltier effect for a duration to reduce a difference in temperature between the Tsp and Tc. The Tsp and Tc can be compared with a resolution of approximately 0.5 degrees Celsius. The Tsp and Tc can also be compared with a resolution of approximately 0.0625 degrees Celsius. The microcontroller compares a change of rate of the Tc and the Tsp. The microcontroller compares a change of rate of the Tc and the Tsp. The Tsp can be defined as a range of temperatures. The microcontroller is configured to receive a user defined Tsp. At least three thermoelectric units are configured for simultaneous use of the Peltier effect such that a first thermoelectric unit transfers heat to a second thermoelectric unit while the second thermoelectric unit transfers heat to a third thermoelectric unit. A thermal capacitor disposed between each of the thermoelectric units. The thermoelectric heat pump comprises four or more thermoelectric units in each thermoelectric heat pump. A fan is disposed adjacent to the heat sink and configured to aid in removal of heat from the thermoelectric heat pump. Each thermoelectric unit comprises at least 127 coupled pairs of thermocouples and a resistance of at least 3 ohms. In an embodiment, each thermocouple has a resistance of 3.75 ohms. In another embodiment, each thermoelectric unit comprises at least 287 coupled pairs of thermocouples and a resistance of at least 3 ohms. Optionally, each thermoelectric unit can also have a resistance of 8.5 ohms. The thermoelectric heat pump assembly can also be used in method of safely transporting temperature sensitive goods at a selected temperature profile during transport. Temperature sensitive goods are placed in a thermal isolation chamber within the transportation device. The thermal isolation chamber is adapted to thermally isolate the temperature sensitive goods from an outside environment. The thermal isolation chamber is coupled to the at least three thermoelectric units. A temperature of the thermal isolation control system is controlled by activating the Peltier effect of the at least three thermoelectric units.

In accordance with another embodiment, a thermoelectric heat pump assembly may comprise at least three thermoelectric units arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured for simultaneous use of the Peltier effect. A thermally capacitive spacer block is disposed between each of the at least three thermoelectric units. An energy source is coupled to the at least three thermoelectric units and configured to provide a current source to each of the serially connected thermoelectric units. A heat sink is coupled to the at least three thermoelectric units and thermally capacitive spacer blocks

Particular embodiments may comprise one or more of the following features. Each of the thermoelectric units are substantially identical. Each of the thermoelectric units includes a same size. Each of the thermoelectric units is configured to transfer a same amount of heat. Each of the thermoelectric units is configured with a same resistance. An energy source is coupled to the at least three thermoelectric units and configured to provide a current source to each of the serially connected thermoelectric units. The thermoelectric units are identical. The thermoelectric heat pumps are configured to provide temperature control to at least one temperature to within a tolerance of less than about one degree centigrade.

In accordance with another embodiment, a thermoelectric heat pump assembly may comprise at least three thermoelectric units arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured for simultaneous use of the Peltier effect. A thermally capacitive spacer block is disposed between the at least three thermoelectric units.

In an aspect, a thermal protection system relating to thermally protecting temperature sensitive goods can comprise a vessel configured to contain the temperature sensitive goods. A stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules can be thermally coupled to the vessel and arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured such that each thermoelectric module within the stack simultaneously uses the Peltier effect. A thermally capacitive spacer block can be disposed between each of the at least three thermoelectric modules. An energy source can be coupled to the stack of at least three thermoelectric modules and configured to provide a current source to each of the serially connected thermoelectric modules. A heat sink can be coupled to the stack of at least three thermoelectric modules and thermally capacitive spacer blocks opposite the vessel. A microcontroller can be operatively associated with the energy source to direct current from the energy source to the stack of at least three thermoelectric modules.

The thermal protection system can further comprise a system wherein the microcontroller defines a setpoint temperature (Tsp) and compares the Tsp to a temperature (Tc) of a container coupled to the stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules and activates a simultaneous use of the Peltier effect for a duration to reduce a difference in temperature between the Tsp and Tc. The microcontroller can be configured to vary a voltage to the thermoelectric modules by varying a pulse-width-modulation (PWM), a pulse-frequency-modulation (PFM), or a thermal capacitance of the thermal protection system. The Tsp can be defined as a range of temperatures and the Tsp and Tc can be compared with a resolution greater than or equal to 0.01 degrees Celsius. The microcontroller can be configured to received a user defined Tsp. Each thermoelectric module can comprises at least 127 coupled pairs of thermocouples and a resistance of at least 1 ohm.

In another aspect, a thermal protection system relating to thermally protecting temperature sensitive goods can comprise a vessel configured to contain the temperature sensitive goods. A stack of at least three thermoelectric modules can be thermally coupled to the vessel and arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured such that each thermoelectric module within the stack simultaneously use the Peltier effect. A thermally capacitive spacer block can be disposed between each of the at least three thermoelectric modules. An energy source can be coupled to the stack of at least three thermoelectric modules and configured to provide a current source to each of the serially connected thermoelectric modules. A heat sink can be coupled to the stack of at least three thermoelectric modules and thermally capacitive spacer blocks opposite the vessel.

The thermal protection system can further comprise a system wherein each of the thermoelectric modules are substantially identical. Each of the thermoelectric modules can include a same number of thermocouples. The stack of at least three thermoelectric modules can comprise a delta T that increases for each thermoelectric module in a first direction along the stack and an amount of heat transferred by the thermoelectric module (Qc) that increases for each thermoelectric module in a second direction opposite the first direction. Four or more thermoelectric modules can be in each stack of at least three thermoelectric modules. The stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules can comprises a height greater than or equal to 2.5 cm, thereby providing a space for insulation around the stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules between the vessel and the heat sink. The stack of at least three thermoelectric modules can be configured to provide temperature control to at least one temperature to within a tolerance of less than about six degrees centigrade.

In another aspect, a thermal protection system relating to thermally protecting temperature sensitive goods can comprise a vessel configured to contain the temperature sensitive goods. A stack of at least two thermoelectric modules can be coupled to the vessel and arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured such that each thermoelectric module within the stack simultaneously use the Peltier effect. A thermally capacitive spacer block can be thermally coupled to the stack of at least two thermoelectric modules, and a heat sink can be coupled to the stack of at least two thermoelectric modules and thermally capacitive spacer block opposite the vessel.

The thermal protection system can further comprise a system wherein the thermally capacitive spacer block is disposed between the stack of at least two thermoelectric modules. At least one energy source can be operably connected to each thermoelectric module, wherein the energy source is suitable to provide a current, the thermal protection system being configured so that each individual thermoelectric module has a ratio of input current to maximum available current (I/Imax) of 0.17 or less at a steady-state when a change in temperature (ΔT) of the thermal protection system between the vessel and the heat sink is about 20° C. and heat removal (Q) is about 0 Watts. Each of the thermoelectric modules are substantially identical. Each of the thermoelectric modules can include a same size. The stack of at least two thermoelectric modules can be configured to provide temperature control to at least one temperature to within a tolerance of less than about fifteen degrees centigrade.

In yet another aspect a method of safely transporting temperature sensitive goods at a selected temperature profile during transport using a thermal protection system assembly described above can comprise placing the temperature sensitive goods in a thermal isolation chamber within the transportation device, coupling the thermal isolation chamber to the stack of at least two thermoelectric modules and controlling a temperature of the thermal isolation control system by activating the Peltier effect of the at least two thermoelectric modules. The thermal isolation chamber can be adapted to thermally isolate the temperature sensitive goods from an outside environment.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

FIGS. 1A and 1B show a perspective views, illustrating various embodiments of iso-thermal transport and storage systems.

FIGS. **2A**-**2C** show various perspective and plan views, illustrating various embodiment of a lid portion of the embodiments of the iso-thermal transport and storage system shown in FIGS. **1A** and **1B**.

FIG. **3** shows a partially disassembled perspective view, illustrating arrangement of interior components of the embodiment of iso-thermal transport and storage system.

FIG. **4** shows an exploded perspective view, illustrating a mating assembly relationship between a sample rotating assembly and the outer enclosure of the iso-thermal transport and storage system.

FIG. **5** shows a perspective view, illustrating the sample rotating assembly.

FIG. **6** shows a partially exploded perspective view, illustrating the order and arrangement of the inner working assembly and sample placements of the iso-thermal transport and storage system.

FIG. **7** shows a partially disassembled bottom perspective view, illustrating the inner working assembly of the iso-thermal transport and storage system.

FIG. **8** shows a side profile view, illustrating a thermoelectric assembly of the iso-thermal transport and storage system.

FIGS. **9A** and **9B** show an electrical schematic views, illustrating possible electrical control of iso-thermal transport and storage systems.

FIG. **10** shows a perspective view illustrating a possible embodiment of the iso-thermal transport and storage system as viewed from underneath.

FIG. **11** shows a schematic view, illustrating a control circuit board, according to a possible embodiment.

FIGS. **12A** and **12B** show perspective views, illustrating a thermoelectric transport and storage device.

FIGS. **13A** and **13B** show perspective views, illustrating a thermoelectric heat pump assembly can comprise two thermoelectric unit layers and a thermoelectric transport and storage device with a robust shock proof exterior.

FIG. **14** shows a perspective view, illustrating a portable microprocessor.

FIG. **15** shows a side profile view, illustrating a sandwich layer.

FIG. **16** shows a schematic view of a control hardware block diagram, illustrating momentary relay based circuitry programmable by a microprocessor adapted to control the temperature of temperature sensitive goods based on a desired temperature profile.

FIG. **17** shows a schematic view of a possible control logic diagram.

FIG. **18** shows a schematic view of a possible control logic diagram.

FIG. **19** shows two charts, each of which illustrate how various embodiments can be configured to maximize efficiency of operation compared to previously available thermoelectric heat pump systems; the charts further illustrate how heat pumped per unit of input power is maximized during overall use.

FIGS. **20A** and **20B** show an electrical schematic view, in which the thermoelectric heat pump assembly contains six thermoelectric unit layers, and wherein the thermoelectric unit layers can be reconfigurable between a higher power setting and a lower power setting, and series and/or parallel configurations.

FIGS. **21A** and **21B** show electrical schematic views, in which the thermoelectric heat pump assembly contains nine thermoelectric unit layers, and wherein the thermoelectric unit layers can be reconfigurable between a higher power setting and a lower power setting, and series and/or parallel configurations.

FIGS. **22A** and **22B** show an electrical schematic view, in which the thermoelectric heat pump assembly contains nine thermoelectric unit layers, and wherein the thermoelectric unit layers can be reconfigurable between a higher power setting and a lower power setting, and series and/or parallel configurations; and an electrical schematic view illustrating an embodiment in which the thermoelectric transport and storage device contains at least two thermoelectric heat pump assemblies.

FIGS. **23A** and **23B** show electrical schematic views, in which the thermoelectric heat pump assembly contains two thermoelectric unit layers, and wherein the thermoelectric unit layers can be reconfigurable between a higher power setting and a lower power setting, and series and/or parallel configurations.

FIGS. **24A** and **24B** show charts, each of which illustrate how various embodiments maximize efficiency of operation compared to previously available thermoelectric heat pump systems; the charts further illustrate how various embodiments can be configured to maximize heat pumped per unit of input power during overall use, while minimizing the ratio of input current to maximum available current at a given steady-state temperature.

FIGS. **25A**-**25C** show charts, illustrating how various embodiments can be configured to maximize efficiency of operation compared to typical thermoelectric heat pump systems; the charts further illustrate how the various embodiments can be configured to maximize heat pumped per unit of input power during overall use, while minimizing the ratio of input current to maximum available current at a given steady-state temperature.

FIGS. **26A**-**26C** show charts, illustrating how various embodiments can be configured to maximize efficiency of operation compared to typical thermoelectric heat pump systems; the charts further illustrate how various embodiments can be configured to maximize heat pumped per unit of input power during overall use, while minimizing the ratio of input current to maximum available current at a given steady-state temperature.

FIGS. **27A**-**27C** show electrical schematic views, in which thermoelectric heat pump assemblies can comprises four thermoelectric units, all of which are arranged electrically and thermally in series.

FIG. **28** shows electrical schematic views, in which multiple thermoelectric heat pump assemblies are coupled to a container for transporting temperature sensitive material.

FIG. **29** shows an electrical schematic view of a thermoelectric heat pump assembly that can comprise six thermoelectric units, all of which are arranged electrically and thermally in series.

FIG. **30** shows an electrical schematic view of a thermoelectric heat pump assembly that can comprise nine thermoelectric units, all of which are arranged electrically and thermally in series.

FIG. **31** shows an electrical schematic view of a thermoelectric heat pump assembly that can comprise two thermoelectric units, both of which are arranged electrically and thermally in series.

FIGS. **32A**-**32C** show charts, each of which illustrate how various embodiments maximize efficiency of operation compared to previously available thermoelectric heat pump systems; the charts further illustrate how various embodiments can be configured to maximize heat pumped per unit of input power during overall use, while minimizing the ratio of input current to maximum available current at a given steady-state temperature.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Steady-state, as used herein, is the state at which, during operation the heat pump assembly, the heat pump assembly reaches a selected temperature. For example, the heat pump assembly reaches a set temperature and the system is substantially balanced and is simply maintaining the set temperature.

Ambient Temperature is the temperature of the air or environment surrounding a thermoelectric cooling system; sometimes called room temperature.

COP (Coefficient of Performance) is the ratio of the heat removed or added, in the case of heating, divided by the input power.

DTmax is the maximum obtainable temperature difference between the cold and hot side of the thermoelectric elements within the module when Imax is applied and there is no heat load applied to the module.

Heat pumping is the amount of heat (Q) that a thermoelectric device is capable of removing, or "pumping", at a given set of operating parameters. For example, at a steady-state, when change in temperature (ΔT) of the heat pump assembly at the top end compared to the bottom end of the heat pump assembly is 20° C. and heat (Q) is 0.5 Watts, or alternatively when change in temperature (ΔT) of the heat pump assembly at the top end compared to the bottom end of the heat pump assembly is 40° C. and heat (Q) is 1.

Heat sink (also a cold sink when run in reverse) is a device that is attached to the hot side of thermoelectric module. It is used to facilitate the transfer of heat from the hot side of the module to the ambient.

Imax is the current that produces DTmax when the hot-side of the elements within the thermoelectric module are held at 300 K.

Peltier Effect is the phenomenon whereby the passage of an electrical current through a junction consisting of two dissimilar metals results in a cooling effect. When the direction of current flow is reversed heating will occur.

Qmax is the amount of heat that a TE cooler can remove when there is a zero degree temperature difference across the elements within a module and the hot-side temperature of the elements are at 300 K.

Thermal conductivity relates the amount of heat (Q) an object will transmit through its volume when a temperature difference is imposed across that volume.

Vmax is the voltage that is produced at DTmax when Imax is applied and the hot-side temperature of the elements within the thermoelectric module are at 300 K.

FIGS. **1**A and **1**B show perspective views, illustrating at least two embodiments **102** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, according to embodiments of the present disclosure. Iso-thermal transport and storage system **100** can be designed to protect sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** (see FIG. **4**, FIG. **5** and FIG. **6**), mammal biological matter, mammal reproductive cells and/or tissues, horse semen (at least embodying herein a thermal protection system, relating to thermally protecting temperature sensitive goods). Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other sensitive and perishable sensitive goods, such as cell and tissue cultures, nucleic acids, semen, stem-cells, ovaries, equine reproductive matter, bodily fluids, tissues, organs, and/or embryos plant tissues, blood, platelets, fruits, vegetables, seeds, live insects and other live samples, barely-frozen foods, pharmaceuticals, vaccines, chemicals, sensitive goods yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Outer enclosure **105** can comprise a rectangular-box construction, as shown. Outer enclosure **105** can include lid portion **150**, enclosure portion **180**, and base portion **190**, as shown. External dimensions of outer enclosure **105** can be about 14 inches in length with a cross-section of about 9-inches square, as shown.

Lid portion **150** can attach to enclosure portion **180**, with at least one thumbscrew **151** and at least one fibrous washer **152**, as shown and explained herein. When lid portion **150** attaches to enclosure portion **180**, such attachment can provide an airtight seal, as shown, preventing contamination of enclosure portion **180** from external contaminants. Leakages of external contaminants, including microorganisms, into enclosure portion **180** can be prevented by applying pressure between at least one raised inner-portion **158**, of lid portion **150**, and threaded cap **142**, as shown (also see FIG. **2** and FIG. **3**) (at least herein embodying wherein said at least one vessel comprises at least one re-sealable surface structured and arranged to ingress and egress the temperature sensitive goods to and from said at least one thermal isolator) (at least herein embodying wherein said at least one re-sealable surface comprises at least one seal structured and arranged to exclude at least one microorganism from said at least one vessel). Upper-lid raised inner-portion **158** of lid portion **150** can be shaped, as shown, by milling or alternately molding. Upper-lid raised inner-portion **158** can seal to the top of threaded cap **142** (see FIG. **2** and FIG. **3**).

Fibrous washer **152** can comprise an outside diameter of about ½ inch, an inner diameter of about ¼ inch, and a thickness of about 0.08 inch. Over-tightening of thumbscrew **151** may cause cracking or distortion of lid portion **150** or degradation of fibrous washer **152**. Fibrous washer **152** can protect at least one lid portion **150** from at least one user **200** damaging lid portion **150**, due to over-tightening of thumbscrew **151**. Fibrous washer **152** can withstands high compression loads, up to 2000 pounds per square inch (psi) and can prevent vibration between mating surfaces of lid portion **150** and enclosure portion **180**. Also, each fibrous washer **152** can provide sufficient friction to prevent loosening of each respective thumbscrew **151**, as shown. Further, fibrous washer **152** can comprise a flat, deformable, inexpensive-to-produce, readily available, vulcanized, fibrous material, adhering to ANSI/ASME B18.22.1 (1965 R1998). Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other washer materials, such as gasket paper, rubber, silicone, metal, cork, felt, Neoprene, fiberglass, a plastic polymer (such as polychlorotrifluoroethylene), etc., may suffice.

Thumbscrew **151** can feature at least one plastic grip **163**, possibly comprising at least one tang **164**, as shown. User **200** can grasp plastic grip **163** to tighten or loosen thumbscrew **151**, using at least three fingers. User **200** can use tang **164** to apply rotary pressure to plastic grip **163** for tightening or loosening of thumbscrew **151**, as shown. Upon reading this specification, those skilled in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering such issues as future technology, cost, application requirements, etc., other grips, such as, for example, interlocking heads, wings, friction, etc., may suffice.

Thumbscrew **151** can comprise at least one 300-series stainless-steel stud with about ¼-20 inch threads, mounted in phenolic thermosetting resin (possibly reinforced laminate produced from a medium weave cotton cloth impregnated with a phenolic resin binder, MIL-i-24768/14 FBG). Plastic grip **163** can have about a 1½ inch wide top, can be about ⅝ inch thick, and can have about a ¼-inch offset between top portion of screw thread **148** and plastic grip **163**. Screw thread **148** can be about ¾ inch long. Thumbscrew **151** can comprise part number 57715K55 marketed by McMaster-Carr. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other thermosetting composites, such as polyester, epoxy, vinyl ester matrices with reinforcement fibers of glass, carbon, aramid, etc., may suffice.

Stainless steel possesses wear resistance properties appropriate to withstand rough treatment during commercial transport and storage. Stainless steel also provides corrosion proofing to ensure longevity of thumbscrew **151** for applications when embodiment **102** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100** experiences moisture or corrosive environments. Upon reading this specification, those skilled in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering such issues as future technology, cost, application requirements, etc., other screw materials, such as, for example, plastics, other metals, cermets, etc., may suffice.

Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other fastening means, such as adhesives, fusion processes, other mechanical fastening devices including screws, nails, bolt, buckle, button, catch, clasp, fastening, latch, lock, rivet, screw, snap, and other fastening means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

At least one raised section **165** of lid portion **150** can surrounds thumbscrew **151**, as a protective guard, to protect thumbscrew **151** from damage or accidental adjustment, as shown. Raised section **165** can be about 1¼ inch tall, about 3¼ inches wide, and about 3¼ inches long, and can be located at each of the four corners of lid portion **150**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other protective guards, such as, for example, protective rims, gratings, handles, blocks, buffers, bulwarks, pads, protections, ramparts, screens, shields, wards and other such protective guards yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Enclosure portion **180** can contain a means to accept at least one screw thread **148** on thumbscrew **151**, threaded insert **182**, as shown in FIG. **3** and FIG. **4**. Internal thread size of threaded insert **182** can be about ¼-20 with a barrel diameter of about ⅓ inch, and a flange thickness of about 1⁄12 inch. Length of threaded insert **182** can be about 9⁄16 inch. Threaded insert **182** can be molded into, or, alternately, swaged into, enclosure portion **180**, as shown in FIG. **3** and FIG. **4**. Threaded insert **182** can be made of die-cast zinc to provide rust and weather resistance. Threaded insert **182**, as used in embodiment **102**, can comprise part number 91316A200 sold by McMaster-Carr. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other threaded inserts, such as self-tapping, ultrasonic inserts for use on plastic, metal, or wood-base materials yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Inner-layer **155**, located within lid portion **150**, can be formed from urethane, as shown. Inner-layer **155** can be about 1¼ inches thick Inner-layer **155** can be formed from expanded-urethane semi-rigid foam having a density of about of 2 pounds per cubic foot (lb/cu. ft.). Inner-layer **155** can utilize part number SWD-890 as produced by SWD Urethane Company. Urethane is a thermoplastic elastomer that combines positive properties of plastic and rubber. Urethane-foam cells can be created by bubbling action of gases that create small air-filled pockets (possibly no more than 1⁄10 inch in diameter) that are beneficial for creating both resistance to thermal transfer and structural integrity. Further, the urethane foam can act as an impact absorber to protect components of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100** and sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** from mechanical shock and vibration during storage and transport, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other forming means, such as other urethane foaming techniques/materials, plastic or other material, for example, polyvinyl chloride, polyethylene, polymethyl methacrylate, and other acrylics, silicones, polyurethanes, or materials such as composites, metals or alloys yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Inner-layer **155** of lid portion **150** can be encapsulated in outer-surfacing layer **156** that can comprise a tough semi-rigid-urethane plastic, as shown. Outer-surfacing layer **156** can provide durability and protection for embodiment **102** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100** during rough handling and incidents of mechanical shock and vibration. Outer-surfacing layer **156** can be tough and amply flexible to withstand direct impact loads associated with normal commercial storage and transportation, as defined by ASTM D3951-98 (2004) Standard Practice for Commercial Packaging. Outer-surfacing layer **156** can be about ⅛ inch thick, as shown, and can be about 7 lb/cu. ft. density. Outer-surfacing layer **156** can utilize part number SWD-890 as produced by SWD Urethane Company.

Vacuum insulated panels (VIPs) can be incorporated within lid portion **150** as VIP vacuum-panel **157** and in VIP insulation **108**, as shown (also see FIG. **7**) (at least embodying herein at least one thermal isolator for thermally isolating the temperature sensitive goods) (at least herein embodying wherein said at least one thermal isolator comprises at least one vacuum insulator for vacuum-insulating the temperature sensitive goods). VIPs can use the thermal insulating effects of a vacuum to produce highly efficient thermal insulation thermal insulation values (R-values) as compared to conventional thermal insulation, as shown. VIP vacuum-panel **157** and VIP insulation **108** can comprise NanoPore HP-150 core as made by NanoPore, Incorporated. NanoPore HP-150 core, which can comprises a thermal insulation for embodiment **102** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, has an R-value of about R-30 per inch and operates over a temperature range from about −200 degrees centigrade (° C.) to about 125° C. VIP vacuum-panel **157** and VIP insulation **108** can comprise layers of reflective film, having less than about 0.1, in the infrared spectrum from about one micron to about one millimeter wavelength, separating evacuated volumes, having pressure levels of less than 10 Torr. (at least herein embodying wherein said at least one vacuum insulator comprises at least one layer of reflective material; and at least herein embodying wherein infrared emittance of said reflective material is less than about 0.1, in the infrared spectrum from about one micron to about one millimeter wavelength; and at least herein embodying wherein absolute pressure of said least one evacuated volume is less than about 10 Torr).

VIP vacuum-panel **157**, as used in the present disclosure, can be encased in urethane foam to protect VIP vacuum-panel **157** from mechanical damage during usage of embodiment **102** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, as shown. The thermal insulation of VIP vacuum-panel **157** becomes more effective when lid-horizontal decking-surface **153** (see FIG. **2**) is in full contact with enclosure upper-horizontal decking-surface **181** (see FIG. **3**), as shown.

Lid portion **150** also can provide at least one substantially flat-surface **159** that serves as a location for displaying at least one indicia **160**, as shown. User **200** may place indicia **160** on at least one flat-surface **159**, as shown. Indicia **160** may aid in designating ownership, advertising, or warnings for embodiment **102** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100** and/or the contents contained in embodiment **102** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, as shown.

At least one rivet **162** can be used when enclosure portion **180** is formed from at least one wall section **201** and at least one corner section **202**, which require a fastening means to join the sections together, as shown. Wall section **201** can be about ⅛ inch thick, made from aluminum alloy 6061, T6 tempering, and/or anodized coated. Corner section **202** can be about ⅛ inch thick, made from aluminum alloy 6061, T6 tempering, and/or anodize coated. At least one rivet **162** can be used to hold at least one wall section **201** attach to at least one corner section **202**. Rivet **162** can be selected to withstand tension loads parallel to the longitudinal axis of rivet **162** and sheer loads perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of rivet **162**.

Rivet **162** can comprise a blind rivet, alternately a solid rivet. Rivet **162** can be made from aluminum alloy 2024, as shown. Rivet **162** can have a head of about ⅓ inch diameter and can has a shaft of about 5/32 inch diameter. Rivet **162** can comprise part number 97525A470 from McMaster-Carr. Hole size (in wall section **201** and corner section **202**) for rivet **162** may range from about 0.16 inch to about 0.17 inch in diameter. The shaft of rivet **162** can be about ½ inch diameter and can be upset to form a buck-tail head about ⅓ inch diameter after being inserted through holes, in wall section **201** and corner section **202**, located near at least one corner of outer enclosure **105**, as shown herein. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other securing means, such as bolts, buckles, buttons, catches, clasps, fastenings, latches, locks, rivets, screws, snaps, adapters, bonds, clamps, connections, connectors, couplings, joints, junctions, links, ties yet to be developed, etc., may suffice. User **200** may impart rough treatment to embodiment **102**; thus, the design can employ plastic material capable of absorbing impact forces. The nature of the construction of embodiment **102**, in combination with expandable urethane **115** as insulation, assists isolation of thermo-electric assembly **123**, as shown in FIG. **3**, which is prone to damage from mechanical shock and/or vibration, from mechanical shock. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other impact absorption materials, for example, polyvinyl chloride, polyethylene, polymethyl methacrylate, and other acrylics, silicones, polyurethanes, composites, rubbers, soft metals or other such materials yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Enclosure portion **180** comprises at least one vent **183**, located on at least one vertical surface **161**, in close proximity to base portion **190**, as shown. Vent **183** can allow ambient air to freely enter and circulate throughout at least one interior portion of outer enclosure **105**, using at least one fan **120**, as shown (also see FIG. **7**). Vent **183** can provide about a 25% free flow opening (of the lower portion of wall section **201**), through which air may be drawn in or exhausted, as shown. Vent **183** can comprise about 80 slots **184**, each about ⅓ inch wide and about 1 inch high, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other opening means, such as holes, apertures, perforations, slits, or windows yet to be developed but which are capable of ambient air ingress and egress, etc., may suffice.

Base portion **190** may use at least one rivet **162** to connect to enclosure portion **180**, thereby providing structural integrity for embodiment **102**, as shown (also see FIG. **3**). Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other fastening devices, such as bolts, buckles, clasps, latches, locks, screws, snaps, clamps, connectors, couplings, ties or other fastening means yet to be developed, or fusion welding, adhesives, etc., may suffice.

Base portion **190** further can provide a mounting surface for at least one battery system **119** and can be a means for enclosing enclosure portion **180** from the bottom, as shown (also see FIG. **3**). Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other enclosing means, such as lids, caps, covers, hoods, floors, bottoms or other such enclosing device yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **1**B shows a perspective view of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102***b*. Thermoelectric transport or storage device **102***b* comprises outer enclosure **105**, inside of which is disposed a vessel or container **121**. Vessel **121** is configured to safely contain temperature sensitive and perishable goods **139** for storage, transportation, and shipping. Vessel **121** can be placed within, or accessed from, threaded cap **142**, which can be disposed on or within enclosure upper-horizontal decking-surface **181**. A vent **183** can be formed is a side surface of outer enclosure **105** to allow ambient air from without thermoelectric transport or storage device **102***b* to be circulated by fan **120** within storage device **102***b* to assist in controlling a temperature of temperature sensitive and perishable goods **139**. In an embodiment, a carrying case **170** can optionally be disposed around outer enclosure **105** to add additional padding, covering, protection, or information to the outer enclosure. Carrying case **170** can be formed of cloth, plastic, or any other natural or synthetic material, and can include one or more handles or adjustable openings. The adjustable openings that can be temporarily opened or closed by zippers, snaps, hook and loop fasteners, buttons, latches, cords, or other suitable devices to provide or restrict access to various portions of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102***b*, including threaded cap **142**, vessel **121**, upper-horizontal decking-surface **181**, and vent **183**.

FIG. **2**A shows a bottom-side perspective view, illustrating lid portion **150** of embodiment **102***a* of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, according to an embodiment. Lid-horizontal decking-surface **153** can be molded, alternately machined, to be a mating and sealing surface with enclosure upper-horizontal decking-surface **181**, as shown (also see FIG. **3**). Lid-horizontal decking-surface **153** and enclosure upper-horizontal decking-surface **181** can come into complete contact with each other, as shown in FIG. **1**A, forming one of two barriers between the external environment and the contents of vessel or container **121**, as shown (at least embodying herein wherein said at least one thermal isolator comprises at least one vessel structured and arranged to contain the temperature sensitive goods). Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other enclosure means, such as lids, caps, covers, hoods, or floors, yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

VIP vacuum-panel **157** can be embedded in lid portion **150** and can provide thermal insulation within embodiment **102**, as shown. VIP vacuum-panel **157** can be about 4 inches wide, about 4 inches long and about 1 inch thick, as shown. Upon reading this specification, those skilled in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering such issues as future technologies, application requirements, etc., other VIP vacuum panel sizes, may suffice.

At least one retainer **149** can hold thumbscrew **151** and fibrous washer **152** from becoming detached from lid portion **150**, as shown. Retainer **149** can slide smoothly down the threads when installed, such that thumbscrew **151** and fibrous washer **152** can be retained within at least one lid alignment well **166** in lid portion **150**, as shown. Retainer **149** can be about 5⁄16 inch inner diameter, about 5⁄8 inch outer diameter, and can be made of black phosphate spring steel, as shown. Retainer **149** can comprise part number 94800A730 from McMaster-Carr. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other retaining means, such as clasps, clamps, holders, ties and other retaining means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Lid alignment well **166** can align with at least one lid alignment post **167** (see FIG. **3**). Lid alignment well **166** and lid alignment post **167** can allow quick alignment of lid portion **150** to enclosure portion **180**.

FIG. **2**B shows a two-dimensional plan view of a top portion of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102***b* shown previously in the perspective view of FIG. **1**B. As shown in FIG. **2**B, threaded cap **142** can be disposed on or within enclosure upper-horizontal decking-surface **181** and over vessel **121**. FIG. **2**B shows threaded cap **142** in a closed position disposed over, securing, and enclosing vessel **121** in which temperature sensitive and perishable goods **139** can be placed, stored, and removed. A number of indicia **160** can also be optionally placed on, or within, enclosure upper-horizontal decking-surface **181**. Indicia **160** can include, for example, a charging indicator and a ready indicator, such as a light, for indicating when battery system **119** is being charged through charger **199**, which can include an extendable power cord and adapter to be plugged into one or more standard electrical outlets, or is fully charged and ready for storage or shipment of temperature sensitive goods **139**. Indicia **160** can further include a variable message indicator such as a lighted display that can show a desired or actual temperature within vessel **121**. Indicia **160** can further include a lock that can be turned with a key or other device to turn power on and off to storage device **102***b*, while a low battery indicator and a running indicator can show, such as by a light, whether the unit is running, has a low batter, or both.

FIG. **2**C shows a two-dimensional plan view of a top portion of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102***b* similar to that shown previously in FIG. **2**B. FIG. **2**C differs from FIG. **2**B in that threaded cap **142** has been removed from enclosure upper-horizontal decking-surface **181** such that vessel **121** is open and accessible, allowing for insertion, removal, or inspection of temperature sensitive and perishable goods **139**. As shown in FIG. **2**C, an interior surface of vessel **121** can be optionally configured to comprise openings **134** in an interior surface of vessel **121**. A size, shape, and number of openings **134** can be customizably adjusted and configured to receive one or more sample tubes **140**, including vials, test tubes, or other suitable containers for containing temperature sensitive and perishable goods **139**.

FIG. **3** shows a partially disassembled perspective view, illustrating an optional arrangement of inner-workings assembly **106** of embodiments **102** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**. FIG. **3** also shows threaded cap **142**, which can be about 7½ inches in diameter and about ¾ inch thick. Threaded cap **142** can assist isolation of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** from its surroundings, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other methods of isolation, such as caps, coverings, packings, gaskets, stoppers yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **3** also shows at least one battery system **119**, mounted on base portion **190**. Battery system **119** can provide a portable, reliable power source for long durations while sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** are being transported in embodiment **102**. At least one circuit board **117** can be wired to, and powered by, battery system **119** using at least one wire **177**, as shown. Battery system **119** of the present disclosure can be about 3.6 volt DC supply. Battery system **119** can be rechargeable, can provide a source of power for thermo-electric assembly **123**, and can be controlled by at least one safety on/off switch **118**, as shown. Where an external power source is available, battery system **119** may be recharged while embodiment **102** is in storage or transport.

In addition, at least one sample battery pack **143** may be mounted on sample assembly frame **141**, as shown in FIGS. **4** and **5**. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other power sources, such as accumulators, dry batteries, secondary batteries, secondary cells, storage cells, storage devices, wet batteries or other such storage means yet to be developed, or a fixed power source, etc., may suffice.

Wire **177** as shown comprises about 16 AWG coated 26/30 gage copper stranded-conductors with an insulation thickness of about 1⁄64 inches and a diameter of about 1⁄12 inches, as shown. Operating temperature range of wire **177** can be from about −40° C. to about 105° C. Insulation covering conductors of wire **177** can be color-coded polyvinyl chloride (PVC). Voltage rating of wire **177** is about 300V. Wire **177** can be marketed by Alpha Wire Company part number 3057. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other wiring configurations for example parallel, other series/parallel connections, other size wire, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **3** also shows thermo-electric assembly **123**, can comprise at least one thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133** (see FIG. **8**) capable of being wired in at least one series and/or parallel configuration to at least one battery system **119**. Thermoelectric semi-conductor node **133** can provide an incremental temperature staging means (at least embodying herein at least one thermo-electric heat pump adapted to control-at least one temperature of the temperature sensitive goods; wherein said at least one thermoelectric heat pump comprises at least one thermo-electric device adapted to active use of the Peltier effect). Thermo-electric assembly **123** can be about 75/8 inches high, about 5 inches long and about 5 inches wide when stacked, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other heat-transferring effects, such as induction, thermal radiation means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

In embodiment **102**, user **200** may select at least one set-point temperature for sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**. Embodiment **102** can then automatically maintain the at least one set-point temperature for sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**, for a duration necessary to store or transport sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** to at least one predetermined destination. Embodiment **102** can use thermo-electric assembly **123**, in conjunction with fan **120**, in at least one closed-loop feedback sensing of at least one thermocouple **124**, as shown. Thermocouple **124** can comprise at least one temperature-sensing chip, such as produced by Dallas Semiconductor part number DS18B20. Thermocouple **124** can be used as a single-wire programmable digital-thermometer to measure temperatures at thermocouple **124**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other temperature tuning means, such as adjusters, dials, knobs, on/off power switches, switches, toggles, tuners, thermo-conductive means or other temperature tuning means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Embodiment **102** can comprise at least one vessel **121** designed to store and contain sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**, as shown. Vessel **121** can be made from urethane or, alternately, aluminum. Upper section of vessel **121** can comprise at least one inner threaded portion **189** that permits vessel lid **122**, having an external threaded portion **185**, to be threaded together (also see FIG. **4**). Threading together of upper section of vessel **121** and vessel lid **122**, as shown in FIG. **6**, can provide a seal that isolates sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** from the local environment. Vessel lid **122** alternately may have a friction fit sealing relationship with vessel **121**, as shown. Tolerances for friction fit will depend on pressure required to be maintained within vessel **121**. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other means of attaching, such as, clamped-lid mechanisms, bolted lids, joined by adhesives and other means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Aluminum 6069-T4 may be used, due to its light weight and ability to withstand high pressure, should sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** need to be maintained at a high pressure. Aluminum can be used because of its high thermal conductivity of about, at about 300° Kelvin (300° K), 237 watts-per meter-degree Kelvin ($W \cdot m^{-1} \cdot K^{-1}$), manufacturability, light weight, resistance to corrosion, and relative dimensional stability (low thermal expansion rate) over a substantial working temperature range. During the heat transfer processes, materials store energy in the intermolecular bonds between the atoms. [When the stored energy increases (rising temperatures of the material), so does the length of the molecular bond. This causes the material to expand in response to being heated, and causes contraction when cooled.] Embodiment **102** can overcome this problem by using aluminum due to the relatively low thermal expansion rate of about 23.1 micro-meters per meter per degree Kelvin ($\mu \cdot m^{-1} \cdot K^{-1}$) (300° K.). This property can allow embodiment **102** to effectively manage thermally induced linear, area, and volumetric expansions throughout a wide range of ambient temperatures and desired set-point temperatures for sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other materials, such as, for example, copper, copper alloys, other aluminum alloys, low-thermal-expansion-composite constructions, etc., may suffice.

At least one volume **116** exists between VIP vacuum-panel **157** and vessel **121** mounted above thermo-electric assembly **123**, as shown. Volume **116** can be filled with expandable urethane **115**, as shown. The expandable urethane **115** foam can have a density of about 2 lb/cu. ft. Expandable urethane **115** can secure all components within the upper portion of embodiment **102**, as shown. Expandable urethane **115** foam can be only allowed to fill the portion shown within the illustration so as to allow ample available space for heat sink **114**, at least one fan assembly **127**, and at least one battery system **119** to operate in a non-restricted manner, as shown (also see FIG. **6**).

Alternately, volume **116** between VIP vacuum-panel **157** and vessel **121** can be filled up to three layers of about ½ inch thick VIPs. Such VIPs can be curved around vessel **121** and thermo-electric assembly **123**, creating a total minimum thickness of about 1½ inches, as shown. Square-box style VIPs may also be used depending on specific geometries associated with embodiment **102**. After such VIPs are positioned around vessel **121** and thermo-electric assembly **123**, the remaining cavity areas are filled with expandable urethane **115**. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other surface cooling means, such as appendages, projections, extensions, fluid heat-extraction means and others yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

All of the mentioned items within inner-workings assembly **106** lose efficiency if not cooled. Fan **120** can circulate ambient air through vent **183**, impinging on at least one fin **113**, as shown. Fin **113** can absorb heat from the air (in heating mode) or reject heat to the air (cooling mode). Fin **113** further can transport heat from/to its surface into heat sink **114**, through conductive means. Fin **113** and heat sink **114** can be comprised of 3000 series aluminum. Aluminum alloys have the significant advantage that they are easily and cost-effectively formed by extrusion processes. Upon reading this specification, those skilled in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering such issues as future technologies, cost, available materials, etc., other fin and heat sink materials, such as, for example, other aluminum alloys, copper, copper alloys, ceramics, cermets, etc., may suffice. Heat sink **114** can be designed for passive, non-forced air-cooling, as shown.

Fan **120** can provide necessary thermal control by creating an active means of air movement onto heat sink **114** surfaces, as shown. Fan assembly **127** can be about 3⅞ inches long, about 3⅞-inches wide and about 1⅓ inches high. Fan **120** can comprise model number GM0504PEV1-8 part number GN produced by Sunon. Fan **120**, can be rated at about 12 VDC, however, fan **120** can operate at 5 VDC. Airflow can be about

5.9 cubic feet per minute (CFM) at a speed of about 6000 revolutions per minute (rpm) with a power consumption of about ⅜ watts (W). Noise of fan **120** can be limited to about 26 decibels (dB). Fan **120** can weighs about 7.5 grams (g).

Fan **120** alternately can be operated at about 5 volts with a DC/DC boost converter, not shown. The DC/DC boost converter can be a step-up type, possibly comprising a start-up of less than 0.9 VDC with about 1 mill-ampere (mA) load. The DC/DC boost converter can comprise part number AP1603 as marketed by Diodes Incorporated. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other conversion means, such as, for example, buck converter or buck-boost converter yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Heat sink **114** can comprise at least one heat-sink plate **136**, base surface **171** (at least embodying herein wherein said at least one vessel comprises at least one heat-transferring surface structured and arranged to conductively exchange heat to and from said at least one temperature controller), and fins **113**. Heat sink **114** can be FH-type as produced by Alpha Novatech, Inc., as shown. A configuration of heat sink **114** can comprises about 200 individual, fins **113**, shaped hexagonally, possibly comprising dimensions of about ⅛ inch wide across the flats and about 1⅓ inches long, as shown. Fins **113** can be arranged in a staggered relationship on heat-sink plate **136**, as shown. Heat-sink plate **136** can be about ¼ inch thick, about 3⅞ inches wide and about 3⅞ inches long, as shown. Heat-sink plate **136** and fins **113** can comprise a one-piece extrusion. Base surface **171** of heat sink **114** can be flat and smooth to ensure adequate thermal contact with the object being cooled or heated, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other heat sink materials, such as copper, gold, silver, brass, tungsten, ceramics, cermets, or metal alloys of different sizes and configurations, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **4** shows an exploded perspective view, illustrating a mating assembly relationship between at least one sample rotating assembly **109** and outer enclosure **105** of the isothermal transport and storage system **100**, according to an embodiment, such as thermoelectric transport or storage device **102*a*** from FIG. **1**A or thermoelectric transport or storage device **102*b*** from FIG. **1**B.

Vessel **121** may be designed to allow rotation capability, as shown. Further, vessel **121** alternately may be designed to allow at least one formed separator support sample tube **140**, set in vessel **121**, and spaced so as to eliminate contact with any other sample tube **140**, as shown in FIG. **6**. Sample tube **140** may be made of glass, alternately metal alloy, alternately plastic, alternately composite material.

Sample rotating assembly **109** can comprise a removable assembly that can allow rotation of at least one sample tube **140** while sample assembly frame **141** can remain stationary within the confines of outer enclosure **105**, as shown. Sample rotating assembly **109** can be located within outer enclosure **105**, as shown. Sample rotating assembly **109** can be held securely by means of threaded cap **142** that can restrict any upward motion of sample rotating assembly **109** within outer enclosure **105**, as shown. Sample rotating assembly **109** can be about 11 inches in diameter and about 3 7/16 inches wide, as shown. User **200** may open, close, and reopen lid portion **150** during storage, or during transport, without compromising the integrity of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**.

Maintaining integrity of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** comprises protection from, for example, contamination by foreign gases, liquids, moisture, or solids, minimizing any fluctuations in temperature, preventing any spillage or degradation by ultraviolet or other forms of radiation, as shown. If integrity is not maintained, sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** may die, degrade through separation, denature, deform, mold, dry out, become contaminated, or be unusable or inaccurate, i.e., if not kept within a protective isolated environment. Sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** can maintain integrity due to the further sealing within vessel **121**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other enclosing means for example caps, covers, hoods, roofs, top and others yet to be developed, or other rotational means, etc., may suffice.

As shown in FIG. **4**, sample assembly frame **141** provides a structural mount for mounting at least one sample battery pack **143**, as shown. Also, sample assembly frame **141** can provide a suspending mount, flat-bar **173**, to suspend at least one rotating cylinder **145**, as shown. Additionally, sample assembly frame **141** can provide a handle for user **200** to grasp sample rotating assembly **109** for lifting-from or lowering-into outer enclosure **105**, as shown.

User **200** may remove sample rotating assembly **109** for accuracy of filling or dispensing from sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** into at least one sample tube **140**, as also shown in FIG. **5**. This feature can also permits ease of cleaning and sanitizing of embodiment **102** by user **200** at re-use intervals of embodiment **102**, as shown (at least embodying herein wherein such step of providing re-use comprises at least one cleaning step). Sample rotating assembly **109** can require less space when removed from outer enclosure **105**, as shown, for instances when space is limited such as in laboratory settings. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other portable containing means, such as bags, canisters, chambers, flasks, humidors, receptacles, or vessels yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **5** shows an enlarged perspective view, of a non-limiting sample-rotating assembly **109**. Sample battery pack **143** can comprise at least one battery **186**, three AAA-sized batteries (each can have about 7/16-inch outer diameter and being about 1¾ inches long) as shown. These batteries may be tabbed for ease of interconnection and removal, as shown. These batteries can be series connected to supply about 3.6 volts direct current (VDC) to supply power to sample rotating assembly **109**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other batteries, such as, for example, AA-sized batteries, unified battery packs, etc., may suffice.

Batteries **186** can comprise alkaline batteries, alternately, high capacity nickel metal hydride (NiMH) batteries, alternately lithium ion batteries, alternately lithium polymer batteries. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other battery materials, such as, for example, other metal hydrides, electrolytic gels, bio-electric cells, etc., may suffice.

Sample battery pack **143** can provide power for at least one gear motor **144** to turn at least one shaft **146**, as shown (at least herein embodying wherein said at least one goods rotator is structured and arranged to self-power from at least one energy storage device) (at least herein embodying wherein said least one energy storage device comprises at least one battery). Shaft **146** can be connected to one end of rotating cylinder **145** and connected to at least one gear motor **144** on the opposing end of rotating cylinder **145**, as shown. When at least one gear motor **144** is activated, shaft **146** can rotate rotating cylinder **145** turning about the longitudinal axis of shaft **146**, as shown. The rotating motion may be enabled to one direction, or, alternately, in two directions for agitating, depending on application requirements to preserve sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**. Shaft **146** can have an outer diameter of about ½ inch and is about 3¼ inches long, as shown. Gear motor **144** can have about 1-inch outer diameter and about ½ inch length, as shown (at least herein embodying wherein said at least one thermal isolator comprises at least one goods rotator structured and arranged to rotate the temperature sensitive goods within said at least one thermal isolator). Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other rotating means, such as worm and pinion combinations, gearing combinations, sprockets and chains, pulleys and belts or chains and swing mechanical mechanisms yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Sample tube **140** can be held securely when rotating cylinder **145** to allow sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** to remain in a fixed position or alternately to rotate upon activation of at least one gear motor **144**, as shown. Sample tube **140** (in the illustrated embodiment) can have an outer diameter of about 3⅞ inches and is about 8 inches long, as shown. Sterile centrifuge tubes as produced by Exodus Breeders Corporation code number 393 may be used, as shown. Sample tube **140**, can comprise a size of about 50 milliliter (ml), is non-free standing and has a conical end.

Sample assembly frame **141** can be in a closely fitted relationship within outer enclosure **105** to minimize vibrations, as shown. Sample tube **140** may be in a closely fitted relationship with rotating cylinder **145** to minimize vibration and the possibility of physically damaging sample tube **140**, as shown. This arrangement can minimize potential compromising of the integrity of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**, as well as lessens possible dangers of exposure to user **200**. Sample assembly frame **141** can be about 5 inches high and can be made of urethane smooth-cast-roto-molded, as shown. Sample assembly frame **141** can comprise of at least one upright bar **147**, possibly comprising an outer diameter of about ½ inch and a length of about 5 inches, as shown. Upright bar **147**, can comprise urethane can be friction fitted through upper frame-plate **138** and possibly lower frame-plate **137**, as shown. Upright bar **147** can protrude about ½ inch outwardly from upper side of upper frame-plate **138** and lower side of lower frame-plate **137**, as shown. One upright bar **147** can be affixed with at least one connection flat-bar **173** to another upright bar **147**, to provide structural rigidity for sample assembly frame **141**, as shown. At least one connection flat-bar **174** can connect two other upright bars **147**. Connection flat-bar **174** can comprise at least one shaft pass-through **175** allowing shaft **146** to pass through with at least one bearing **176** to aid rotation, as shown.

Gear motor **144** can be fit on end of shaft **146** and held in place with a hub **188**, as shown. Connection flat-bar **173** can provide a mounting for sample battery pack **143**, as shown. Connection flat-bar **173** can be attached to upright bar **147**, by adhesive, alternately fusion welding, as shown. Connection flat-bar **173** can prevent twisting of sample assembly frame **141**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, materials, etc., other attachment methods, such as, for example, screws, epoxies, soldering, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **6** shows a partially exploded perspective view, illustrating an non-limiting example of an order and arrangement of inner-workings assembly **106** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**. Embodiments **102** may be used without sample rotating assembly **109**, as shown, and thereby is suitable for handling sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** that do not need to be rotated or agitated to preserve the required quality. Fan **120** can blow ambient air pulled in through vent **183**, as shown in FIG. **1** and FIG. **4**. Heat sink **114** can comprise fin **113** mounted or otherwise configured to be perpendicular to fan **120**, as shown. Heat sink **114** can be configured for providing maximum surface area exposure to air currents from fan **120**, to maximize the rates of cooling or heating within embodiment **102**, as shown. This method of forced-convection heat-transfer can create fewer fluctuations in temperature of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** over any extended time. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other heat sink cooling devices, such as aerators, air-conditioners, and ventilators yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

At least one retainer **112** can be attached at its base to thermo-electric assembly **123**, and can partially wrap around vessel **121** can permit user **200** to lift vessel **121** out of embodiment **102**. Retainer **112** can be a means to ensure vessel **121** is held in place, as shown. Retainer **112** can be formed in a U-shape, as shown, and can be constructed of smooth-cast-roto-molded urethane as made by Smooth-On manufacturers. Smooth-Cast ROTO™ urethane is a semi-rigid plastic and can be selected for its density-control, structural and insulating characteristics. Smooth-Cast ROTO™ has a shore D hardness of about 65, a tensile strength of about 3400 psi, tensile modulus of about 90,000 psi, with a minimal shrinkage of about 0.01 in/in over a seven-day period.

Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other retaining means, such as catches, clasps, clenches, grips, holds, locks, presses, snaps, vices, magnets, or mechanical attaching means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Retainer **112** according to the present disclosure may alternately be manufactured from aluminum, due to its high thermal conductivity and low mass density. The high thermal conductivity of retainer **112** can efficiently transport heat between thermo-electric assembly **123** and vessel **121**, possibly comprising a minimum of temperature difference between thermo-electric assembly **123** and vessel **121**. This efficient heat conduction can support temperature stability for sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**, contained within vessel **121**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other high thermal conductors, such as copper, brass, silver, gold, tungsten and other conductive element alloys yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Thermo-electric assembly **123** can be mounted on base surface **171** of heat sink **114** and can connect to retainer **112**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other retaining means, such as catches, clasps, clenches, grips, holds, locks, nippers, presses, snaps, vices, magnets, or mechanical attaching means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Circuit board **117** can be mounted substantially parallel to thermo-electric assembly **123** by at least one bracket **110**, as shown. Also, circuit board **117** can mount to flat upper surface of heat sink **114**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, cost, etc., other circuit board mountings, such as suspension in foam insulation, epoxies, snap-in, cable suspensions, etc., may suffice.

Circuit board **117** can control and regulates the functioning of thermo-electric assembly **123**, according to electronic feedback from thermocouple **124** within thermo-electric assembly **123**, as also shown in FIG. **8**. At least one mounting hole can be present in circuit board **117** and to allow mounting by bracket **110**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other mounting means for example hooks, magnets, mechanical fastening means yet to be developed, fusion means, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **7** shows a partially disassembled bottom perspective view, illustrating inner-workings assembly **106** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, according to an embodiment. Excess heat can be pumped into heat sink **114** from thermo-electric assembly **123** and can convectively transfer into ambient air by forced convection from fin **113**, by at least one fan **120**, as shown.

During time periods when heat must be sourced from the ambient to warm sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**, such that the temperature of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** can be maintained near a desired set-point temperature, fin **113**, as shown, may serve to collect heat from the ambient air. Under this alternate operational mode, at least one fan **120** can push relatively warm ambient air over fin **113**, thereby allowing heat to be absorbed into fin **113**. Such absorbed heat can conduct up into thermo-electric assembly **123**, where the heat can be pumped, as needed, into vessel **121** and thus provides necessary heating to maintain the set-point temperature of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**.

Control circuit on circuit board **117** enables user **200** to re-set set-point temperature, of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**, to the desired temperature at which sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** are maintained (this arrangement at least herein embodying wherein such step of providing re-use comprises at least one set-point re-setting step). Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other heat-sink heat exchanges, such as fluid cooling through internal flow of liquids, air cooling means and other passive or active cooling means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Fan **120** can use at least one blade **128** to pull ambient air into at least one vent **183**, as shown in FIGS. **1** and **4**. Further, fan **120** can blow the ambient air onto heat sink **114**, as shown. Embodiment **102** can either dissipate excess heat from heat sink **114** to the ambient air or alternately extract heat from the ambient air (into heat sink **114**), as needed, to maintain the at least one set-point temperature of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**, as shown. Also, fan **120** can exhaust the ambient air out through vent **183**, as shown in FIGS. **1** and **4**. Fan **120** can operate at low power to pull ambient air into at least one vent **183** and can exhaust the ambient air out through at least one vent **183**, as shown in FIGS. **1** and **4**. Blade **128** has a steep pitch for sufficient air movement at the hottest rated ambient air temperature while maintaining the lowest rated set-point temperature for sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**. Input voltage to fan **120** can be alternately determined by closed-loop feedback sensing of at least one thermocouple **124**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other controllers of forced air movers having for example heat-flux sensors, system voltage sensors yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

The opening for blade **128** to rotate within fan assembly **127** can be between about 5 inches and about 8 inches in diameter, depending on volume of airflow needed. Vent **183** can be free from any obstructions to allow proper circulation to occur, as shown in FIGS. **1** and **4**. Thermo-electric assembly **123** can be mounted on base surface **171** of heat sink **114**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other air movers, such as, for example, turbines, propellers, etc., may suffice.

Thermo-electric assembly **123** comprises at least one thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**, as shown. Thermo-electric assembly **123** can comprises a plurality of thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**, as shown. Thermo-electric assembly **123** can also comprise between about six and about nine thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**, electrically connected in series, as shown in FIG. **9**A (at least embodying herein wherein said at least one thermo-electric heat pump comprises a minimum of about three sandwich layers).

The quantity of thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133** can be determined by the total expected variance between a desired set-point-temperature of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** and the ambient temperatures that embodiment **102** will be potentially subjected to. Once the set-point-temperature-to-ambient-temperature range of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** can be defined, it is divided by a per-unit factor to determine the desired number of thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133** that are electrically connected in series (and thermally connected in series). The per-unit factor for bismuth-telluride (Bi.sub.2Te.sub.3) based thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes, ranges from about 3° C. to about 5° C. Thus, if the set-point-temperature of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** is about 0° C. and the ambient temperature is expected to range up to about 27° C.; about six to about nine thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133** are needed. Thus, the thermo-electric assembly **123** can comprise about six to about nine thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**, that can be electrically connected in series (and thermally connected in series), as shown.

The per-unit factor for series-connected thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**, and can be selected to maximize the efficiency of heat pumping across thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**. The efficiency at which thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133** pump heat is largely determined by the external boundary conditions imposed on heat pumping across thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**. The most significant of these boundary conditions comprise the temperature gradient (change in temperature from the P-side to the N-side of the thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**) and the level of heat conductivity at the semi-conductor node boundaries.

Generally, operation that is more efficient correlates with smaller temperature gradients and with higher levels of heat conductivity at the semi-conductor node boundaries of thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**. Thus, thermo-electric assembly **123** has a sufficiently large number of thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133** electrically connected in series (and thermally connected in series) such that no single thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133** experiences a temperature gradient greater than from about 3° C. to about 5° C. Also, thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133** are configured such that the level of heat conductivity at each semi-conductor node boundary can approximate the thermal conductivity of aluminum.

The number of thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133** electrically connected in parallel can be determined by the total heat-rate that must be pumped from, or to, sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** such that the temperature of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** may be maintained at, or near, the desired set-point-temperature, within from about 2 degree C. to about 8 degrees C., or within 1 degree C. The heat pumping capacity of each thereto-electric semi-conductor node **133**, electrically connected in parallel (and thermally connected in parallel), depends on specific characteristics of the specific thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**, as shown. Thus, a designer of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100** can consult the manufacturer of the specific thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133** to determine its rated-heat-pumping-capacity. Additionally, the designer of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100** can determine the total heat-rate that must be pumped from, or to, sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**. Once these factors are known to the designer of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, the designer divides the total heat-rate by the rated-heat-pumping-capacity of a single series string of thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**, to determine the required number of thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**, which should be electrically connected in parallel (and thermally connected in parallel).

VIP insulation **108** can provide a further degree of control over gradual changes in temperature by decreasing heat convection, radiation and conduction and increasing thermal resistance. About 2 lb/cu. ft. expanded urethane foam, as produced by Smooth-On model Foam-iT!™, can be used for VIP insulation **108**. VIP insulation **108** can comprise three sheets of about ½ inch thickness making a total thickness of about 1½ inches which is wrapped around inner-workings assembly **106**, as shown. Height of VIP insulation **108** can be about 8½ inches, as shown. All VIPs can be encased in urethane foam to minimize damage to VIPs, making embodiment **102** more shock-resistant, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other insulating means, such as epoxies, unsaturated polyesters, phenolics, fibrous materials and foam materials yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **8** shows a side profile view, illustrating thermo-electric assembly **123** of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, according to a particular embodiment. The present disclosure can attain a high coefficient of performance using the method herein described. At least one thin non-electrically conductive layer **131** can electrically separate thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** from thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**, while maintaining thermal conductivity. At least one thin-film thermal epoxy **135**, fills microscopic imperfections between thin non-electrically conductive layer **131** and thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** (also see FIG. **8**). Upon reading this specification, those skilled in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering such issues as future technology, cost, application needs, etc., other thermal conductivity maximizers, such as, for example, thermal greases, thermal dopes, molecularly smoothed surfaces, etc., may suffice.

Thermo-electric assembly **123** can comprise a plurality of thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**, connected physically (thermally) in series and/or parallel, and electrically in series and/or parallel, and can use at least one battery system **119** to create at least one bidirectional heat-pump, as shown. This configuration can provide progressive temperature gradients and precise temperature control (at least herein embodying wherein such control of such at least one temperature comprises controlling such at least one temperature to within a tolerance of less than about one degree centigrade). Thermo-electric assembly **123** can be used to increase the output voltage since the voltage induced over each individual thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133** is small. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other heating/cooling means for example, thermoelectric refrigerators, thermo-electric generators yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **8** shows repetitive layers of thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** and thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**, which comprise thermo-electric assembly **123**. Thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133** can comprise bismuth-telluride that can be secured with electrically-conductive thermal adhesive, silver-filled two-component epoxy **132**, as shown. Thin-film thermal epoxy **135** can fill any microscopic imperfections at the interface between each layer of thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** and thin non-electrically conductive layer **131**, as shown.

Thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133** can comprise banks of electrically parallel-connected bismuth-telluride semiconductors that are in-turn electrically connected in series and interconnected to both power supply circuits and sensing/control circuits, as shown.

The overall efficiency of operation of thermo-electric assembly **123** can be improved with the combination of adding thermal capacitance, between each electrically series-connected (and thermally connected in series) thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**, and the ability to independently control the voltage across each series-connected thermoelectric semi-conductor node **133** (at least herein embodying wherein said at least one thermo-electric heat pump comprises at least one thermal capacitor adapted to provide at least one thermal capacitance in thermal association with said at least one thermo-electric device).

Thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** can be the thermal capacitance added between each electrically series-connected (and thermally series-connected) thermoelectric semi-conductor node **133**, as shown. Also, the voltage, across each electrically series-connected (and thermally series-connected) thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**, can be controlled by at least one closed-feedback loop sensory circuit, as shown. Further, the voltage, across each electrically series-connected (and thermally series-connected) thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**, can be independently controlled, as shown. Still further, the independently-controlled voltage impressed across each electrically series-connected (and thermally series-connected) thermoelectric semi-conductor node **133**, is integrated with adjacent such independently-controlled voltages, so as to ensure that under normal operational conditions, all electrically series-connected (and thermally series-connected) thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133** pump heat generally in the same direction, as shown. Even further, any short-term variation in voltage, impressed across each electrically series-connected (and thermally series-connected) thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**, can be constrained to less than about 1% of the RMS value of the voltage impressed across each electrically series-connected (and thermally series-connected) thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**.

At least one thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** can be about ¼ inch thick, and can be flat with parallel polished surfaces, as shown (at least embodying herein wherein such at least one thermal capacitance is user-selected to provide intended thermal association with said at least one thermo-electric device). At least one thermoelectric capacitance spacer block **125** can have slight indentations on parallel surfaces to allow the assembler to align thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** with thermoelectric semi-conductor node **133** while assembling thermo-electric assembly **123**. Aluminum alloy 6061 can be used because of its light-weight, relatively high yield-strength of about 35000 psi, corrosion resistance, and excellent machinability. Aluminum alloy 6061 is resistant to stress corrosion cracking and maintains its strength within a temperature range of about −200° C. to about +165° C. Aluminum alloy 6061 is sold by McMaster-Carr as part number 9008K48. Alternately, thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** comprises copper and copper alloys, which provide needed levels of thermal conductivity, but are not as advantageous as aluminum alloys relative to structural strength and weight considerations.

Thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** can be 'sandwiched' between each thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133** in thermo-electric assembly **123**, as shown (at least embodying herein wherein each such sandwich layer comprises at least one set of said thermo-electric devices and at least one set of said thermal capacitors). Thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** can, during normal operation, provides delayed thermal reaction time (stores heat), and in conjunction with controlled operation of a plurality of thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**, may act to minimize variations in temperature swings for sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** (at least herein embodying wherein said intended thermal association of such at least one least one thermal capacitance is user-selected to provide increased energy efficiency of operation of said at least one thermoelectric device as compared to said energy efficiency of operation of said at least one thermoelectric device without addition of said at least one least one thermal capacitor).

Circuit board **117** can be mounted and wired to control thermo-electric assembly **123** as shown. Circuit board **117** houses circuitry (see FIG. **11**) for connecting at least one thermocouple **124** such that at least one thermocouple **124** acts as a one-wire programmable digital thermometer to measure at least one temperature at thermocouple **124**, as shown. Circuitry on circuit board **117** can also provide at least one feedback loop for control of voltage and power feeds to at least one plurality of thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**.

Silver-filled two-component epoxy **132** can be a thermal adhesive (at least embodying herein wherein each such sandwich layer is suitable for thermally-conductively connecting to at least one other such sandwich layer; and wherein thermal conductance between essentially all such attached sandwich layers is greater than 10 watts per meter per degree centigrade; and wherein thermal conductance between essentially all such attached sandwich layers is greater than 10 watts per meter per degree centigrade). In some embodiments, thermal conductance between essentially all such attached sandwich layers can be less than 10 watts per meter per degree centigrade, and can be in a range of 5-10 watts per meter per degree centigrade, and can be, without limitation, approximately 6, 7, 8, or 9 watts per meter per degree centigrade.

Silver-filled two-component epoxy **132** can have a specific gravity of about 3.3, can be non-reactive and can be stable over the operating temperature range of embodiment **102**. Silver-filled two-component epoxy **132** can be part number EG8020 from AI Technology Inc. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other materials with a high Seebeck coefficient, such as uranium dioxide, Perovskite® and other such materials yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Metal-to-metal contact is ideal for conducting the maximum heat transfer. However, a minute amount of thin-film thermal epoxy **135** applied provides filling of any air pockets and may increase thermal conduction between thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** and thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133** as shown in FIG. **8**. Trapped air is about 8000 times less efficient at conducting heat than aluminum; therefore, thin-film thermal epoxy **135** can be used to minimize losses in interstitial thermal conductivity, as shown. The increase in efficiency can be realized because the effective contact-surface-area is maximized, thereby minimizing hot and cold spots that would normally occur on the surfaces. The uniformity increases the thermal conductivity as a direct result. Thin-film thermal epoxy **135** is often applied on both surfaces with a plastic spatula or similar device. Conductivity of thin-film thermal epoxy **135** is poorer than the metals it couples, therefore it can be important to use no more than is necessary to exclude any air gaps. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other conductor enhancements, such as, for example, other thermal adhesives, material fusion, conductive fluids or other such conductor enhancers yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **9**A shows an electrical schematic view, illustrating electrical control of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, according to a particular embodiment. According to embodiments of the present disclosure, the multiple temperature staging process can be accomplished by having at least two thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133** that, when wired in series, combine to form thermo-electric assembly **123**, as shown. Additional thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133** may be electrically series-connected (and thermally series-connected) or electrically parallel connected (and thermally series-connected) to extend the heat-pumping capabilities of thermo-electric assembly **123**, as shown.

Individual battery cells in at least one battery system **119** may be wired to switch between combinations of series and/or parallel depending on specific power available or if user **200** desires that particular design, as shown. At least one serial/parallel conversion relay **187** can provide switching between combinations of series and/or parallel modes. Serial/parallel conversion relay **187** can comprise double pole double throw (DPDT). Serial/parallel conversion relay **187** can further comprise a latching type of relay, which does not require continuous power to remain in either position. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other relay switching means, such as dual coil, non-latching, reed relays, pole and throw relays, mercury-wetted relays, polarized relays, contactor relays, solid-state relays, Buchholz relays, or other current switching means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

When increased voltage is supplied to selected layers of thermo-electric assembly **123** these sandwiched layers can be capable of pumping heat at higher rates, as required to ensure that the temperature of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** can be maintained over a wide range of ambient conditions, as shown. This variation in heat pumping rate with each sandwiched layer of thermo-electric assembly **123** is allowed since at least one thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** can be provided between each thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133**, as shown. Each at least one thermo-electric capacitance spacer block **125** can allow a buffering (momentary storage) of heat between adjacent thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes **133**, as shown. This buffering can allow each thermo-electric semi-conductor node **133** flexibility to pump heat at varying rates while maintaining overall heating or cooling rates as required so as to maintain sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** at or near its desired temperature set-point. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other isolating means for example shims, blocks, chocks, chunks, cleats, cotters, cusps, keystones, lumps, prongs, tapers made of metallic and non-metallic materials yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Battery system **119** may comprise three each about 1.2 volt DC rechargeable batteries wired in series to thermo-electric assembly **123**. Nominal capacity of this configuration of battery system **119** is about 10000 ampere-hour (Ah) with a minimum capacity of about 9500 milliampere-hour (mAh) per 1.2 VDC rechargeable battery. Maximum charging current of this configuration of battery system **119** is about of about 5 A. Battery system **119** can comprise Powerizer rechargeable battery part number MH-D10000APZ, having a maximum discharging current of about 30 A. Dimensions of each battery can be about 1.24 inches by about 2.36 inches. Each, each battery can weigh about 5.7 ounces and can have a cycle performance of above about 80% of initial capacity at 1000 cycles at about 0.1° C. discharge rate.

Heat pumping rates, between sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** and the ambient air surrounding iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, may be actively increased or decreased by thermo-electric assembly **123** within iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, as shown. The direction of the heat pumping within this system can be fully reversible and available upon instant demand. Changing the polarity of the voltage of battery system **119**, as applied across thermo-electric assembly **123**, causes heat to be pumped in opposite directions (either from the ambient surrounding iso-thermal transport and storage system **100** to sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**, or from sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** to the ambient surrounding iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**). Changes in the level of voltage, at which power from battery system **119** is applied across thermo-electric assembly **123**, cause heat to be pumped, by thermo-electric assembly **123**, at greater or lesser rates. The combination of controlling the polarity, and the magnitude, of voltage from battery system **119** can allow sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** can be maintained near a predetermined set-point temperature. The predetermined set-point temperature can be maintained as the ambient temperature varies widely. This allows the integrity of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** can be maintained over a wide range of ambient conditions. Also, this allows the integrity of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139** can be maintained for long transporting-distances, or long storage-time periods, or both. The duration of the long transporting-distances or the long storage-time periods is largely determined by a combination of the total stored energy in battery system **119** and the rate at which that energy is dissipated into thermo-electric assembly **123**, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other voltage regulating means for example multi-output pulse-width modulation power supplies, flyback-regulated converters, magnetic amplifier/switching power supplies yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **9**B shows an electrical schematic view, illustrating an alternate electrical control of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, according to a particular embodiment.

Thermo-electric assembly **123** alternately may operate with pulse-width modulation based voltage control, as shown. Such pulse-width modulation voltage control is not limited to about 1.2, 2.4, 3.6, 4.8 or 12 VDC battery-string voltages. Rather, the pulse-width modulation based voltage control can be varied as needed to achieve intermediate voltages consistent with maintaining constant temperature within at least about 1° C., as shown in FIG. **9**B (at least herein embodying wherein such control of such at least one temperature comprises controlling such at least one temperature to within a tolerance of less than one degree centigrade).

Pulse-width modulation can use a square wave, wherein the duty cycle is modulated, so as to vary the average value of the resulting voltage waveform. The output voltage of the pulse-width modulation voltage-control can be smooth, as shown. The output voltage can have a ripple factor of less than about 10% of the RMS (root mean square) output voltage, and can result in less than about 1% variation in the change in temperature across thermo-electric assembly **123** (at least herein embodying wherein said intended thermal association is user-selected to control usage of proportional control circuitry in combination with at least one energy store to power said at least one thermo-electric heat pump to control such at least one temperature of the temperature sensitive goods).

At least one DC/DC converter **129** can be a switch-mode converter, which can provide output voltages that are greater than its input voltage, as shown. Input voltage for DC/DC converter **129**, as utilized in iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, can be sourced from at least one battery system **119**. DC/DC converter **129** can provide output power at voltages in excess of battery system **119**, as shown. This attribute of DC/DC converter **129** can allow substantial flexibility in the operation of iso-thermal transport and storage system **100**, particularly the operation of fan **120**, as shown. Powering fan

120 at higher input voltages, are available directly from battery system 119, results in fan 120 operating at higher speeds (revolutions per minute) and thus higher cooling rates. Thus, varying the input voltage into fan 120 can also vary the ability of iso-thermal transport and storage system 100 to dissipate heat. Increasing input voltage into fan 120, above the output voltage available from battery system 119, also can increase the highest ambient temperatures at which iso-thermal transport and storage system 100 can operate. Additionally, increasing the voltage across thermo-electric assembly 123 also can increase the rate at which thermo-electric assembly 123 pumps heat from sensitive and perishable sensitive goods 139 to the ambient (when operating in cooling mode), or from the ambient to sensitive and perishable sensitive goods 139 (when operating in heating mode). Thus, the addition of DC/DC converter 129 can be highly useful for extending the operational flexibility iso-thermal transport and storage system 100.

Power from battery system 119, entering into DC/DC converter 129 or directly into at least one thermo-electric semiconductor node 133, exits passing through at least one relay 178 and at least one relay 179. Relay 178 and relay 179 can be momentary latching relay(s) that perform as electrical switches that open and close under of at least one control of monitoring circuitry on circuit board 117. Relay 178 and relay 179 can be latching relays, meaning they require control power only during the time that they switch from their on-to-off state or switch from off-to-on state, thus minimizing control power usage (at least embodying herein wherein said intended thermal association of such at least one thermal capacitance is user-selected to allow usage of momentary-relay-based control circuitry in combination with at least two energy stores to power said at least one thermo-electric device to achieve control of at least one temperature of the temperature sensitive goods).

Relay 178 and relay 179 can be double pole, double throw (DPDT), latching-style relays. Relay 178 and relay 179 can be digital, high-sensitivity low-profile designs, which may withstand voltage surges meeting FCC Part 68 regulation. Relay 178 and relay 179 can be a low-signal style G6A as manufactured by Omron. A standard dual-coil latching relay 178 and relay 179 can be part number G6AK-234P-ST-US. Specifications on this relay include a rated voltage of about 5 VDC, a rated current of about 36 mA and a coil resistance of about 139 ohm (.OMEGA.). A minimal power can be consumed during the latching operation of relay 178 and relay 179. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other relay switching means, such as dual coil, non-latching, reed relays, pole and throw relays, mercury-wetted relays, polarized relays, contactor relays, solid-state relays, Buchholz relays, or other current switching means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Iso-thermal transport and storage system 100 can operate most efficiently when thermo-electric assembly 123 is electrically wired in series, as shown. However, thermo-electric assembly 123 may be wired in various combinations of series and parallel, as a means of adjusting the heat-pumping rate, as shown. Thus, iso-thermal transport and storage system 100 can operate efficiently when the wiring of thermoelectric assembly 123 can be switched as needed to mirror the heat-pumping demand, as that demand changes with time, as shown. Iso-thermal transport and storage system 100 can provide such operational efficiently by switching the input voltages into thermo-electric assembly 123 using at least one relay 178 and at least one relay 179. At least one relay 178 and at least one relay 179 can switch available voltages, from battery system 119, without continuously dissipating energy. Monitoring circuitry on circuit board 117 can monitor the status of at least one relay 178 and at least one relay 179 to prevent unnecessary energizing of outputs if at least one relay 178 and at least one relay 179 are already at a desirable position (at least herein embodying wherein said at least one thermo-electric heat pump comprises at least one first such sandwich layer comprising such set of said thermo-electric devices; wherein each thermo-electric device comprising said plurality is electrically connected in parallel with each other each thermo-electric device comprising said plurality; and wherein each of set of said thermo-electric devices comprising such first sandwich layer is thermally connected in series with each other sandwich layer). Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other power conservation means other energy-efficient switching means, such as control devices, incremental power storage means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

At least one DC/DC converter 129 can utilize pulse-width modulation (hereinafter "PWM") may be incorporated into circuitry on circuit board 117 to boost voltage to thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes 133 when higher rates of heat pumping is required. Such higher voltages, applied to thermo-electric semi-conductor nodes 133, permit higher rates-of-change in temperature, thus increasing the heat transfer rate in that portion of thermo-electric assembly 123, as shown, to remove excessive heat from the portions of thermo-electric assembly 123, as shown. Once the temperature of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods 139 is normalized, the system may return to normal high efficiency operation.

FIG. 10 shows a perspective view illustrating embodiment 102*a*, of iso-thermal transport and storage system 100 as viewed from underneath, as shown previously in FIG. 1A. Safety on/off switch 118 can be mounted on horizontal upper-surface 191 (see FIG. 3) of base portion 190. Base portion 190 can measure about 9 inches wide by about 9 inches long. User 200 can activate or deactivate safety on/off switch 118 on iso-thermal transport and storage system 100, by moving it to the appropriate position. At least one recess 192 can be provided, as shown, to allow safety on/off switch 118 to be protected from accidental switching causing iso-thermal transport and storage system 100 to cease operation. This recessed design of safety on/off switch 118 can serve to prevent iso-thermal transport and storage system 100 from operating when not required or, more dangerously, not operating when necessary. A simple mishap such as inadvertently bumping the switch to the off position may allow iso-thermal transport and storage system 100 to return to ambient environmental temperature, which may damage or destroy sensitive and perishable sensitive goods 139. The danger in accidental shutoff of safety on/off switch 118 is that at least one required temperature-range of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods 139 protected in vessel 121 is compromised. Recess 192 can be about 1⅓ inches wide, about ⅞ inch long and about 1 inch deep. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other switching means for example, actuators, triggers, activators or other such switching means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

Embodiment **102** is designed to be hardened relative to mechanical shock, thereby creating extended expected usable-life and cost-effectiveness for user **200**, during normal transport and storage conditions, as shown. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now understand that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other shock protectors, such as, for example, pads, buffers, fillings, packings or other such shock protecting means yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **11** shows a schematic view, illustrating a control circuit board, according to an embodiment. Circuit board **117** can use a series P-1 linear analog controller **315**, PIC-16F88-1/P, with an output of 0-5 VDC, corresponding to a thermistor range of about 0-50 thousand ohms (K.OMEGA.) or about 0-500 K.OMEGA. Series P-1 linear analog controller **315** can be provided with temperature set-point, maximum current set-point, loop gain and integral-time single-turn adjustment potentiometers. High current-levels may be applied to control actuators, relay **178** and relay **179**, while maintaining low power on circuit board **117**. Heat may be pumped in either direction, to or away from, sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**, as shown in FIG. **6** according to desired temperature setting (set-point temperature of sensitive and perishable sensitive goods **139**). Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other controller means, such as other circuit boards, temperature monitors yet to be developed, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **11** shows the control circuit board physical layout for circuit board **117**. FIG. **11** shows an optional pin-configuration for relay-driver device ULN2803 **310**. FIG. **11** also shows an optional pin-configuration for series P-1 linear analog controller **315**. Additionally, FIG. **11** further shows optional pin-configurations for relay **178** and relay **179**. Potential additional control relays R**3**, R**4**, R**5**, and R**6** are also shown in FIG. **11**. Upon reading this specification, those skilled in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering such issues as future technologies, cost, space limitations, etc., other circuit board layouts, such as, for example, single integrated chip layouts, size variant layouts (longer, wider, shorter, etc.), stacked layouts, multi-board layouts, etc., may suffice.

The wiring connections between thermo-electric assembly **123** and at least one battery system **119** can use soldered connections, as shown. Circuit board **117** can comprise G10 epoxy-glass board, about 1/16 inches thick, about 2½ inches wide and about 3⅞ inches long, possibly comprising one-ounce etched-copper conductors on at least one side, as shown.

Solder comprises a fusible metal alloy, possibly comprising a melting range of about 90° C. to about 450° C. Solder can be melted to join the metallic surfaces of the wire **177** to circuit board **117**. Flux cored wire solder can be used, such as Glow Core, marketed by AIM. Solder can be lead-free compatible, can have excellent wetting properties, can have a wide process-time window and can be cleanable with a CFC-free cleaning solution, designed for use in ultrasonic cleaning or spray and immersion systems, total Clean 505 as manufactured by Warton Metals Limited. Alternately, other metals such as tin, copper, silver, bismuth, indium, zinc, antimony, or traces of other metals may be used within the solder mixture. Also, lead-free solder replacements for conventional tine-lead (Sn60/Pb40 and Sn63/Pb37) solders, having melting points ranging from about 118° C. to about 340° C., which do not damage or overheat circuit board **117** during soldering processes, are utilized.

Alternately, other alloys, such as, for example, tin-silver-copper solder ($SnAg_{3.9}Cu_{0.6}$) may be used, because it is not prone to corrosion or oxidation and has resistance to fatigue. Additionally, mixtures of copper within the solder formulations lowers the melting point, improves the resistance to thermal cycle fatigue and improves wetting properties when in a molten state. Mixtures of copper also retard the dissolution of copper from circuit board **117**. Upon reading the teachings of this specification, those with ordinary skill in the art will now appreciate that, under appropriate circumstances, considering issues such as changes in technology, user requirements, etc., other wiring controlling means, such as boards, cards, circuit cards, motherboards yet to be developed, or other combinations of solder including $SnAg_{3.0}Cu_{0.5}$, $SnCu_{0.7}$, $SnZn_9$, $SnIn_{8.0}Ag_{3.5}Bi_{0.5}$, $SnBi_{57}Ag_1$, $SnBi_{58}$, $SnIn_{52}$ and other possible flux and alloy solder formulations, etc., may suffice.

FIG. **12**A illustrates an embodiment of thermoelectric heat pump assembly **310**. In this embodiment, thermoelectric heat pump assembly **310** has a top end **312** and a bottom end **314**, thermoelectric heat pump assembly **310** comprising at least one thermoelectric unit layer **320** capable of active use of the Peltier effect. Thermoelectric heat pump assembly **310** further comprises a capacitance spacer block **125** suitable for storing heat and providing a delayed thermal reaction time of the assembly **310**, wherein the capacitance spacer block **125** is thermally connected to thermoelectric unit layer **320**. Assembly **310** further comprises: at least one energy source **340** operably connected to the at least one thermoelectric unit layer **320**, wherein the energy source **340** is suitable to provide a current; a heat sink **114** associated with a fan assembly **127**, wherein in the heat sink **114** is thermally connected at the bottom end of the heat pump assembly **310**, the heat pump assembly **310** being thermally connected to an isolation chamber **336**, and wherein the thermoelectric heat pump assembly **310** further comprises a circuit board **117**.

FIG. **12**B shows a top view of another embodiment of thermoelectric transport and storage device **102**, showing: a thermal isolation chamber **336**, an LCD display **386**, at least one energy source **340**, and a DB connector **384**.

FIG. **13**A shows another embodiment of thermoelectric heat pump assembly **310**, the assembly **310** comprising: two thermoelectric unit layers **320** capable of active use of the Peltier effect, each thermoelectric unit layer **320** having a cold side **322** and a hot side **324** (See FIG. **15**); at least one capacitance spacer block **125** suitable for storing heat and providing a delayed thermal reaction time of the assembly **310**, the capacitance spacer block **125** being between a first thermoelectric unit layer **332** and a second thermoelectric layer **334** (See FIG. **15**), wherein the top portion **326** of the capacitance spacer block **125** is thermally connected to the hot side **324** of the first thermoelectric unit layer **332** and the bottom portion **328** is thermally connected to the cold side **322** of the second thermoelectric unit layer **334** (See FIG. **15**), thereby forming a sandwich layer **330** suitable to pump heat from the first thermoelectric unit layer **332** to the second thermoelectric layer **334** (See FIG. **15**); and a heat sink **114** associated with a fan assembly **127**, wherein the heat sink **114** is thermally connected at the bottom end **314** of the heat pump assembly **310**.

FIG. **13**B shows a perspective view of another embodiment of thermoelectric transport and storage device **102**, wherein the transport and storage device **102** includes: a thermal isolation chamber **336**, a robust shock proof exterior **370**, an LCD display **386**, at least one energy source **340**, and a DB connector **384**.

FIG. **14** shows a perspective view, illustrating a portable microprocessor **380**, according to an embodiment of the present disclosure. In one embodiment, a portable microprocessor **380** may be utilized to communicate with the thermoelectric transport or storage device **102** (See FIG. **13**B) to send and receive time and temperature profiles related to the thermoelectric heat pump **310**. The sending and receiving of time and temperature profiles between the portable microprocessor **380** and thermoelectric transport or storage device **102** may either be directly through DB connectors **384** or alternatively through radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags. When the portable microprocessor **380** is sending or receiving time and temperature profiles directly through the DB connectors **384** or RFID tag the thermoelectric transport or storage device's **10 2** energy source **340** may supply the needed power to activate the portable microprocessor **380**. The amount of power generally needed to activate the portable microprocessor **380** is 5 volts. Upon activation, the portable microprocessor **380** may then communicate with an electrically-erasable programmable ROM (EEPROM) rewritable memory chip **382** operatively associated with the thermoelectric transport or storage device **102**. Such communication between the portable microprocessor **380** and EEPROM rewritable memory chip **382** may be through a serial protocol by way of a multi-master serial computer bus. During communication the portable microprocessor **380** may also receive the time and temperature profiles from the EEPROM rewritable memory chip **382** and configure new time and temperature profiles for the EEPROM rewritable memory chip **382** relating to the thermoelectric heat pump **310**. For instance, the portable microprocessor **380** may reconfigure the time for activating a series of thermoelectric unit layers **320** upon reaching a specified temperature.

FIG. **15** shows a side profile view, illustrating a sandwich layer **330**, according to an embodiment of the present disclosure. The sandwich layer **330** comprises at least one capacitance spacer block **125** suitable for storing heat and providing a delayed thermal reaction time of the assembly **310**, the capacitance spacer block **125** having a top portion **326** and a bottom portion **328** and being between a first thermoelectric unit layer **332** and a second thermoelectric layer **334**, wherein the top portion of the capacitance spacer block **125** is thermally connected to the hot side **324** of the first thermoelectric unit layer **332** and the bottom portion **328** is thermally connected to the cold side **322** of the second thermoelectric unit layer **334**, thereby forming a sandwich layer **330** suitable to pump heat from the first thermoelectric unit layer **332** to the second thermoelectric layer **334**.

FIG. **16** shows a microprocessor **350** operatively associated with the thermoelectric heat pump assembly **310**. As shown, microprocessor **350** communicates with EEPROM chip **382** to obtain instructions for operating at least one double-pole double-throw (DPDT) relay **360-364**. The communication between microprocessor **350** and EEPROM chip **382** may include the sequencing of DPDT relays **360-364**. For instance, microprocessor **350** may communicate with relays **360-364** to place thermoelectric unit layers **320** in series or parallel depending on the temperature of a canister, wherein the canister is comprised of the thermal isolation chamber **336** (see FIG. **12**A).

Other communication between microprocessor **350** and DPDT relays **360-364** may include allocating power from battery **119** or alternative 5 volt direct-current (DC) transformer to various parts of the thermoelectric transport or storage device **102**, such as fan assembly **127** (see FIG. **12**A). A DC-to-DC converter, consisting of an inverter followed by a step-up or step-down transformer and rectifier may also be used to supply direct-current to microprocessor **350**. In addition, microprocessor **350** communicates with LCD display **386** (see FIG. **12**B) to convey information wherein microprocessor **350** is powered by a 3.6 volt battery pack which is connected by way of a master power switch.

In another embodiment, as shown in FIG. **17**, a portable microprocessor **380** i.e., "Smartdevice" (see FIG. **14**) communicates with EEPROM chip **382** through a multi-master serial computer bus using I2C protocol to convey time and temperature profiles relating to the thermoelectric unit layers **320**. Initially, as the power is turned on for the thermoelectric transport or storage device **102**, all relays **360-364** are initially off. Next, microprocessor **350** of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102** checks for the presence of a portable microprocessor **380**. If a portable microprocessor **380** is found the microprocessor **350** waits for operations to complete and ask user to reset. From this point, microprocessor **350** reads operating parameters from EEPROM chip **382**. Microprocessor **350** may then receive temperature protocols and auxiliary operations of charging battery and recording EEPROM chip **382**.

As shown in FIG. **17** and FIG. **18**, temperature control subroutines are conveyed by microprocessor **350** to relays **360-364**. The subroutines, define a setpoint temperature (Tsp) and control relays **360-364** to place thermoelectric unit layers **320** in series or parallel depending on Tsp and canister temperature (Tc), wherein the canister is comprised of the thermal isolation chamber **336** (see FIG. **12**A). For instances, in one embodiment the subroutines may include the following instructions: 1) if Tc<Tsp, then turn relay off; 2) if Tc>(Tsp+0.1° C.), then switch to 9S and 2.4 volt mode; 3) if Tc>(Tsp+0.2° C.), then switch to 4&5S and 2.4 volt mode; 4) if Tc>(Tsp+0.3° C.), then switch to 3S and 2.4 volt mode; 4) if Tc>(Tsp+0.5° C.), then switch to 4&5S and 4.8 volt mode; 5) if Tc>(Tsp+0.7° C.), then switch to 3S and 4.8 volt mode; 6) if the battery charger is connected, then force 4.8 volt battery relay on; and 7) if batter charger is disconnected; then switch to normal 2.4 volt/4.8 volt operation.

As shown in FIG. **18**, in another embodiment the subroutines may include the following instructions: 1) if Tc<Tsp, then turn relay off; 2) if Tc>(Tsp+0.1° C.), then switch to 6S and 3.6 volt mode; 3) if Tc>(Tsp+0.2° C.), then switch to 3S and 3.6 volt mode; 4) if Tc>(Tsp+0.3° C.), then switch to 2S and 3.6 volt mode; and 5) if Tc>(Tsp+0.5° C.), then switch to 1S and 3.6 volt mode. In yet another embodiment, the subroutines may include the following instructions: 1) if Tc<Tsp, then turn relay off; 2) if Tc>(Tsp+0.2° C.), then switch to 2S and 3.6 volt mode; and 3) if Tc>(Tsp+0.5° C.), then switch to 15 and 3.6 volt mode.

FIG. **19** shows two charts, each of which illustrate how embodiments of the present disclosure are configured to maximize efficiency of operation compared to previously available thermoelectric heat pump systems. For example, embodiments of the heat pump assembly can be configured so that each thermoelectric unit layer at steady-state during operation has ratio of the heat removed divided by the input power (or COP) that is prior to and less than the peak COP on a COP curve of performance (See infra FIGS. **25**A-**25**C and FIGS. **26**A-**26**C).

FIGS. **20**A-**23** show the thermoelectric unit layers **320** of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102**. More specifically, FIG. **20**A shows a 6 layer thermoelectric unit layer **320** in series, as well as in 6S-3.6 volt mode wherein thermoelectric unit layers **320** receive current from energy source **340** in order to create a heat pump which draws heat from thermal isolation chamber **336** to heat sink **114**. Each thermoelectric layer **320** comprises capacitance spacer block **125**, cold side **322** of thermoelectric unit layer **320**, and hot side **324** of thermoelectric unit layer **320**, wherein first thermoelectric unit layer **332** is adjacent to thermal isolation chamber **336**. In the 6S-3.6 volt mode heat is transferred from thermal isolation chamber **336** to heat sink **114**. Similar to FIG. **20**A, FIG. **20**B shows a 6 layer thermoelectric unit layer **320**. However, FIG. **20**B shows the 6 layer thermoelectric unit layer **320** wherein 3 thermoelectric unit layers **320** are in 2 sets of series, corresponding to a 3S-3.6 volt mode.

FIGS. **21**A and **21**B show 9 layer thermoelectric unit layer **320** stacks. In FIG. **21**A all 9 thermoelectric unit layers **320** are in series and correspond to a 9S-4.8 volt mode. In FIG. **21**B the 9 layer thermoelectric unit layers **320** are broken into one set of 5 thermoelectric unit layers in series and one set of 4 thermoelectric unit layers in series, corresponding to a 4&55-4.8 volt mode. FIG. **22**A shows the 9 layer thermoelectric unit layer **320** stack in three sets of 3 thermoelectric unit layers in series.

FIG. **22**B shows how the thermoelectric unit layer **320** stacks may be placed in parallel when one thermoelectric unit layer **320** stack is not sufficient. FIGS. **23**A and **23**B show a 2 layer thermoelectric unit layer **320** wherein FIG. **23**A is in 2S-3.6 volt mode and FIG. **23**B is in 1S-3.6 volt mode. As previously stated, switching thermoelectric unit layers **320** between modes allow the thermoelectric transport or storage device **102** to more efficiently utilize energy source **340** while maintaining a desired Tc.

FIGS. **24**A and **24**B further emphasize advantages of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102**, (see FIG. **13**B), wherein the maximum current, current, maximum Delta-T, Delta-T, transferred heat, voltage, ratio of current to maximum current, ratio of Delta-T to maximum Delta-T, are displayed. FIG. **24**A further shows the 1S mode and 2S mode at Delta-T of 20.9° C. and 39.4° C. Likewise, FIG. **24**B shows a 1S and 2S mode at Delta-T of 10° C., 20° C. and 40° C. However, FIG. **24**B defines values for heat transferred Q. FIG. **25**A shows a graph of a typical operating point coefficient of performance at a Delta-T of 20° C., wherein Delta-T is the temperature difference between thermal isolation chamber **336** and heat sink **114**. The coefficient of performance is defined as the amount of heat transferred from thermal isolation chamber **336** divided by the amount of power (voltage multiplied by current) required to operate thermoelectric transport or storage device **102**. FIG. **25**B further shows the optimum operating point coefficient of performance at a Delta-T of 20° C., which corresponds to FIG. **25**C showing the operating point coefficient of performance of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102**. As shown in FIG. **25**A through FIG. **25**C the operating point coefficient of performance for thermoelectric transport or storage device **102** is well above the typical operating point coefficient of performance. That is, thermoelectric transport or storage device **102** is able to pump more heat from thermal isolation chamber **336** to heat sink **114** using less current and ultimately less power than typical thermoelectric systems. Further improvements over typical thermoelectric systems was also shown in FIG. **26**A through FIG. **26**C at a Delta-T of 40° C.

FIGS. **27**A-**31** are similar to FIGS. **20**A-**23**B in that FIGS. **27**A-**31** disclose various arrangements of thermoelectric heat pump assemblies or thermal protection systems **464** that include different numbers of thermoelectric modules. FIGS. **27**A-**31** differ from FIGS. **20**A-**23**B in that while FIGS. **20**A-**23**B illustrate thermoelectric modules or unit layers that are reconfigurable between higher power settings and a lower power settings by varying series configurations, parallel configurations, or both, FIGS. **27**A-**31** illustrate thermoelectric heat pump assemblies in which all of the thermoelectric modules of a stack can be electrically coupled and operated only in series, and do not have varying series configurations, parallel configurations, or both, to control higher power settings and a lower power settings. Instead, by providing thermoelectric heat pump assemblies in which all of the thermoelectric modules can be electrically coupled only in series, all of the thermoelectric modules for a given thermoelectric heat pump assembly can only be operated at a same time instead of having less than an entirety of the thermoelectric modules operating at a same time within the thermoelectric heat pump assembly to adjust an amount of heat being transported by the thermoelectric modules.

FIG. **27**A shows a thermoelectric heat pump assembly **464***a* comprising four thermoelectric modules or thermoelectric unit layers **450**. Thermoelectric modules **450** are similar to thermoelectric unit layers **320** of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102**. More specifically, FIG. **27**A shows 4 layers of thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***d* thermally and electrically coupled in series. Thermoelectric modules **450** receive current from energy source **452**, similar to energy source **340** discussed in relation to FIGS. **20**A-**23**B, in order to create a thermal protection system or heat pump which draws heat from vessel, container, or thermal isolation chamber **454** to heat sink **456**, which are similar to thermal isolation chamber **336** and heat sink **114**, respectively. While thermal protection system **464** is discussed, for convenience, with respect to heat being removed from vessel **454** and being transported through thermoelectric modules **450** and capacitance spacer blocks **458** to heat sink **456** to cool or decrease a temperature of vessel **454**, the heat transfer can of course also operate in an opposite direction from heat sink **456** to vessel **454** to heat or increase a temperature of vessel **454** as previously described above. Thermoelectric heat pump assemblies **464** can include any number of thermoelectric modules **450** and capacitance spacer blocks **458**, including without limitation, two to nine thermoelectric modules and capacitance spacer blocks, or any other number of thermoelectric modules **450** according to the operation and design of the heat pump assembly. Each stack **470** of thermoelectric modules **450** can optionally comprise one or more capacitance spacer blocks or capacitive spacer blocks **458** similar to capacitance spacer blocks **125**. Each thermoelectric module **450** comprises a cold side **460** and a hot side **462**, similar to cold side **322** and hot side **324** of thermoelectric unit layers **320**, respectively.

As shown in FIG. **27**A, thermal protection system **464***a* can comprise a stack **470***a* comprising four thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***d* and three capacitance spacer blocks **458** interleaved with, and disposed between, the four thermoelectric modules. First thermoelectric module **450***a* can be adjacent to vessel **454**, and fourth thermoelectric module **450***d* can be adjacent to heat sink **456**. Heat can be transferred from vessel **454** to heat sink **456** through thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***d* to cool the contents of vessel **454**. Thermoelectric modules **450** of FIG. **27**A can also include, as shown, sandwich layers similar to sandwich layer **330** shown in FIG. **15**. By disposing capacitance spacer blocks **458** between thermoelectric modules **450**, capacitance spacer blocks **458** can store heat and provide a delayed thermal reaction time between each adjacent thermoelectric module **450**. Alternatively, as discussed in greater detail below with respect to the other embodiments shown in FIGS. **27**A-**31**, capacitance spacer blocks **458** can be omitted from between thermoelectric modules **450**, such that an entirety, or a portion less than an entirety, of the thermoelectric modules can be in direct contact with each other and not include an intervening capacitance spacer block **458**. While thermoelectric modules **450** are at times, for convenience, referred to throughout the specification as being in direct contact with each other, direct contact between thermoelectric modules **450**, as used herein, can include any desirable thermal interface material or adhesive, as described above, disposed between the thermoelectric modules.

Accordingly, FIG. **27**A shows a thermoelectric heat pump assembly **464***a*, comprising a stack of four identical thermoelectric modules **450** arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured such that each thermoelectric module within the stack can simultaneously use the Peltier effect. As used herein with respect to thermoelectric modules **450**, identical means the same in at least one material aspect of the thermoelectric module, such as an area, footprint, size, material, thermal conductivity, thermal capacity, electrical resistance, or a number of coupled pairs of thermocouples within the thermoelectric module. For example, thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***d* can be commercially available units of a same size, such that each comprises a same number of thermocouples within the thermoelectric module, wherein each thermocouple or thermocouple pair can comprise two nodes. For example, thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***d* can each include 63 thermocouples, 71 thermocouples, 127 thermocouples, 199 thermocouples, 254 thermocouples, 283 thermocouples, 287 thermocouples, or any other number of suitable thermocouples. Alternatively, one or more material aspects of thermoelectric modules **450** can also be similar but not identical to other thermoelectric modules, such as comprising variation among at least one aspect of the thermoelectric modules. Therefore, while thermoelectric modules **450** can be identical in at least one material aspect, the thermoelectric modules can also differ in other aspects, and can, for example, comprise an aspect that varies by a percent difference in a range of 0-30 percent, 0-20 percent, 0-10 percent, 0-5 percent, or within less than one percent difference.

As a non-limiting example, thermoelectric modules **450** can be different commercially available or custom made thermoelectric modules that are similar in size and identical in a number of thermocouples. Thermoelectric module **450***a* can, for example, include a 40 millimeter (mm) 127 thermocouple thermoelectric module while thermoelectric module **450***b* can include a 40 mm 127 thermocouple thermoelectric module. However, thermoelectric units can also comprise any suitable number of coupled pairs. In an embodiment, each thermoelectric unit comprises at least 127 coupled pairs and comprises a resistance of at least 3 ohms. In another embodiment, each thermoelectric unit can comprise a resistance of 3.75 ohms. Alternatively, each thermoelectric unit or thermoelectric module can comprise a resistance less than 3 ohms, such as a resistance greater than or equal to 1 ohm. In yet another embodiment, each thermoelectric unit can comprise at least 287 coupled pairs and a resistance of at least 3 ohms. Optionally, the thermoelectric unit can comprise a resistance of 8.5 ohms.

As indicated above with respect to FIG. **27**A and thermoelectric heat pump assembly **464***a*, the stack of four identical thermoelectric modules **450** are arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured such that each thermoelectric module within the stack simultaneously uses the Peltier effect to conduct heat between vessel **454** and heat sink **456**. For convenience, the term simultaneously refers to thermoelectric modules **450** being electrically connected in series and being activated at a same time, such, as when the electrical circuit is energized and the thermoelectric modules **450** receive power. As such, "simultaneously" as used herein ignores small delays that can exist within the circuit.

Furthermore, as shown in FIG. **27**A, a thermally capacitive spacer block or capacitance spacer block **458** can be disposed between each of the at least three thermoelectric modules **450**. In an embodiment, each thermoelectric module **450** can include a height, or a distance between cold side **460** and hot side **462**, in a range of about 0.38-0.89 cm or about 0.64 cm (i.e., about 0.25 inches). The capacitance spacer blocks **458** disposed between each thermoelectric module **450** can include a height, or a distance between opposing hot and cold sides in a range of about 1.2-1.6 cm, or about 1.4 cm (i.e., about 9/16 inches). Accordingly, an overall height of stack **470***a* comprising four identical thermoelectric modules **450** and three interleaved capacitance spacer blocks **458**, as shown in FIG. **27**A, can be in a range of about 2-10 cm or approximately 6.35 cm (or about 2.5 inches). By creating an offset or distance of about 6.35 cm between vessel **454** and heat sink **456**, insulation can be added around the stack **470** between vessel **454** and the ambient temperature outside the vessel from which the container is being heated or cooled to further increase an efficiency of thermal protections system **464**. Alternatively, an overall height of stack **470** can also be in a range of about 0.5-5 cm or approximately 2.5 cm (or about 1 inch). By creating an offset or distance of about 2.5 cm between vessel **454** and heat sink **456**, insulation can be added around the stack **470** between vessel **454** and the ambient temperature outside the vessel from which the container is being heated or cooled to further increase an efficiency of thermal protections system **464**.

Additionally, because capacitance spacer blocks **458** can store heat to provide a time delay or temporal buffer with respect to heat transfer between a cold side of a first thermoelectric module **450** and a hot side of a second adjacent thermoelectric module **450**, continuous or constant operation of the thermoelectric modules is not required. Instead, microcontroller **466** can turn off thermoelectric modules **450** to provide periods in which the thermoelectric modules are not actively using the Peltier effect to transfer heat between or among the thermoelectric modules and without significantly effecting a temperature differential established between the hold and cold sides of a single unit or between adjacent units during operation because of the thermal capacitive effect of the thermally capacitive spacer blocks.

Capacitance spacer blocks **458** are disposed between each of the plurality of thermoelectric modules **450** and help facilitate the simultaneous transfer of heat through thermoelectric modules **450** between vessel **454** and heat sink **456**. An energy source **452** is coupled in series to stack **470***a* of the plurality of thermoelectric modules **450** and is configured to provide a current source to each of the thermoelectric units. As shown in FIG. **27**A, thermoelectric modules **450** and capacitance spacer blocks **458** can be interleaved to form sandwich layers, as shown and described above with respect to FIG. **8**. As described above, a thermal adhesive can be disposed between each thermoelectric module and capacitance spacer block to increase thermal conductivity and performance. The thermal adhesive can include silver-filled two-component epoxy **132**, wherein thermal conductance between essentially all such attached sandwich layers is greater than 10 watts per meter per degree centigrade; and wherein thermal conductance between essentially all such attached sandwich layers is greater than 10 watts per meter per degree centigrade). In some embodiments, thermal conductance between essentially all such attached sandwich layers can be less than 10 watts per meter per degree centigrade, and can be in a range of 5-10 watts per meter per degree centigrade, and can be, without limitation, approximately 6, 7, 8, or 9 watts per meter per degree centigrade.

A microcontroller **466** is operatively associated with energy source **452** to direct current from the energy source to the plurality of thermoelectric modules **450**. Operation of microcontroller **466** differs from the microcontroller used in conjunction with FIGS. **20**A-**23**B in that instead of using the microcontroller to control at least one relay or electromechanical latch to change among various configurations of different series and parallel connected thermoelectric modules, the arrangement of the stack of thermoelectric modules **450** does not change, but remains in series and configured for simultaneously use the Peltier effect. Microcontroller **466**, is not limited to electromechanical relays, but can include metal-oxide-semiconductor field-effect transistors (MOSFETs) or other suitable components or combinations of components as understood in the art to control an amount and duration of power simultaneously applied to the series connected stack **470** of thermoelectric modules **450**.

Microcontroller **466** can define a Tsp and compare the Tsp to a Tc of vessel **454** and activate a simultaneous use of the Peltier effect for a duration of time in order to reduce a difference in temperature between the Tsp and Tc. Microcontroller **466** can compare the Tsp and Tc with a resolution of approximately 0.0625 degrees Celsius, using microcontroller **466** in a system comprising 12 bit resolution. As such, a temperature of vessel **454** can be controlled within approximately 0.0625 degrees Celsius, if desired. In another embodiment, microcontroller **466** compare the Tsp and Tc with a resolution of approximately 0.0325 degrees Celsius, using microcontroller **466** in a system comprising 16 bit resolution. As such, a temperature of vessel **454** can be controlled within approximately 0.0325 degrees Celsius, if desired. In yet another embodiment, microcontroller **466** can compare the Tsp and Tc with a resolution of approximately 0.01 degrees Celsius (or multiples thereof such as 0.02, 0.03, etc.), using microcontroller **466** in a system comprising 24 bit resolution and platinum resistance temperature detectors (RTDs) and other suitable components that can sample a temperature of vessel **454** 25 times per second and adjust thermoelectric modules **450** up to once every 40 milliseconds. As such, a temperature of vessel **454** can be controlled within approximately 0.01 degrees Celsius, if desired. In some applications, temperature of vessel **454** is controlled to within less than 1.0 degree Celsius or within a range of approximately 0.5-1.0 degrees Celsius.

In an embodiment, microcontroller **466** is optionally configured to receive a user defined Tsp. The Tsp can be defined as a range of temperatures that can be arbitrarily selected by a user, manufacturer, or provider, to correspond to anticipated needs for a particular use of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102**, or to correspond to a particular standard. For example, in the United States, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sets standards for temperature control for various pharmaceuticals. As a non-limiting example, the FDA has a Pharmaceutical Cold Chain Protocol that requires a substance to remain within a temperature range of 2-8 degrees Celsius. Accordingly, the thermal protections system can be configured to provide temperature control within the range of 2-8 degrees Celsius or within a tolerance of less than about six degrees Celsius. As a further non-limiting example, the FDA has a room Temperature Protocol that requires a substance to remain within a temperature range of 15-30 degrees Celsius. Accordingly, the thermal protections system can be configured to provide temperature control within the range of 15-30 degrees Celsius or within a tolerance of less than about 15 degrees Celsius. While vessel **454** comprises a temperature within the specified range or tolerance, microcontroller **466** does not need to activate a simultaneous use of the Peltier effect for each of the thermoelectric modules **450** to transfer heat with respect to the vessel.

When vessel **454** comprises a temperature near or outside a specified range or tolerance, microcontroller **466** can activate simultaneous use of the Peltier effect for each of the thermoelectric modules **450** to transfer heat between each thermoelectric modules **450**. For example, a first thermoelectric unit can transfer heat from a first thermoelectric module **450** to a second thermoelectric module **450** while the second thermoelectric module **450** transfers heat to a third thermoelectric module **450**. Numerical examples of such a configuration are included in the charts of FIGS. **32**A-**32**C.

Capacitance spacer blocks **458** can be disposed between thermoelectric modules **450** to provide thermal capacitance and to provide additional flexibility in allowing for microcontroller **466** to operate with a lower duty cycle or greater off periods when microcontroller **466** does not provide a voltage to thermoelectric modules **450** for active use of the Peltier effect. The duty cycle can be determined by a signal output of microcontroller **466** as part of a pulse-width-modulated (PWM) signal, a pulse-frequency-modulated (PFM) signal, or a thermal modulated signal. For PWM signals, microcontroller **266** can operate in a range of 0.01 hertz (Hz)-10 megahertz (MHz), or in a range of 0.1 Hz-10 kHz, or at about 1 kHz. Unlike conventional systems that do not include capacitive spacer blocks, can operate efficiently with duty cycles measured on the order of seconds rather than milliseconds. For pulse-frequency-modulated (PFM) signals, microcontroller **266** can operate in a range of 0.01 Hz-10 MHz, or in a range of 0.1 Hz-10 kHz, or at about 1 kHz. The operation of microcontroller **266** can also vary an duty cycle for applying a voltage to thermoelectric modules **450** based on the thermal capacitance provided by the configuration of capacitance spacer blocks **458**, including a size and number of the capacitance spacer blocks as well as operating conditions of thermal protection system **464** including, for example, an ambient temperature outside the thermal protection system, Tc, and Tsp. The range of efficient operation of thermoelectric modules **450**, and an ability to operate within a "sweet spot" as disclosed herein, can be facilitated, at least in part, by the inclusion of capacitance spacer blocks **458** within stack **470** of thermoelectric modules **450**. Without capacitance spacer blocks **458**, thermal protection system **464** requires a duty cycle with more on time and could be required to be constantly on or supplying a voltage from energy source **452** to stack **470** of thermoelectric modules **450** such that the thermoelectric modules **450** are actively engaged in using the Peltier effect to transfer heat without pauses or breaks. Storage and slowed release of heat from capacitance spacer blocks **458** to and from thermoelectric modules **450** allows for the thermal protections system **464** to adjust a duty cycle of the voltage supplied by microcontroller **466** and to switch between on and off modes due to the thermal delay resulting from capacitance spacer blocks **458**.

Use of a stack **470** of thermoelectric modules **450** and capacitance spacer blocks **458**, including at least three thermoelectric modules and four thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***d*, as shown in FIG. **27**A, can allow for a smaller temperature gradient or temperature differential (delta T) between thermoelectric modules **450** while having a larger temperature differential or gradient between vessel **454** and heat sink **456**. Additional detail with respect to the above configuration is also presented in the charts shown in FIGS. **32**A-**32**C.

Even without the use of capacitance spacer blocks **458**, use of multiple thermoelectric modules such as two, three, four, or more thermoelectric modules allows for better performance of thermal protection systems **464**, such as thermal protection systems **464***a*, than is achieved with a single thermoelectric module. First, multilayer stacks **470** can perform more efficiently than a single thermoelectric module because multilayer stacks can run at a lower percentage of capacity and at lower voltage, which results in the thermoelectric modules operating at a higher coefficient of performance than single thermoelectric modules. Single thermoelectric modules, as conventionally used, will generally operate at higher percentage of capacity and at higher voltage. The industry has typically recommended running a thermoelectric unit near capacity (Q max), so that a less expensive unit with less capacity can be selected to save money in purchasing the thermoelectric module such that the thermoelectric module is then used to operate near capacity (Q max). As an example of an industry manufacturer recommending thermoelectric module capacity base on operating conditions, see for example, "Aztec Thermoelectric Cooler Analysis" software, made by Laird Technologies. However, by operating a single thermoelectric or stack of thermoelectric modules at or near maximum capacity (Q max) for much of the time heating or cooling is desired, such as at a duty cycle of greater than about 50%, performance efficiencies of the thermoelectric module or modules are decreased.

Better performance of thermal protection systems **464** can also result from use of multiple thermoelectric modules such as two, three, four, or more thermoelectric modules for at least another reason. As a second reason, a temperature differential or delta T between a hot side **462** and cold side **460** of a thermoelectric module **450** in a stack **470** will be less than a temperature differential or delta T between a hot side **462** and cold side **460** of a single thermoelectric module **450** not part of a stack. An entire temperature differential or delta T between vessel **454** and heat sink **458** is present across a single thermoelectric module, while the entire temperature differential can be shared among thermoelectric modules in a stack **470**. Quantitative examples of how a temperature differential or delta T is divided among a plurality of thermoelectric modules **450** in a stack **470**, as illustrated in FIG. **27**A, is provided in the charts of FIGS. **32**A-**32**C. Because the thermoelectric modules are connected in series and receive an approximately equal voltage while the amount of heat transferred (Qc) by each thermoelectric module **450** increases as heat is transferred from vessel **454** to heat sink **456**, the delta T between hot side **462** and cold side **460** of each thermoelectric module **450** decreases from vessel **454** to heat sink **456**. In other words, a delta T that increases for each thermoelectric module **450** in a first direction along stack **470** is inversely related to an amount of heat transferred by each corresponding thermoelectric module, which increases for each thermoelectric module in a second direction opposite the first direction.

Smaller temperature gradients or delta Ts allow for higher efficiency and higher coefficients of performance from thermoelectric modules **450** within stacks **470**. Performance of a stack **470** of thermoelectric modules **450** without any capacitance spacer blocks **458** can include an efficiency in a range of only 60-80% or 65-75% of the performance of a configuration including the capacitance spacer blocks. Stacks **470** of thermoelectric modules **450** are less efficient without the inclusion of interleaved capacitance spacer blocks **458** for a number of reasons. First, efficiency is decreased without the capacitance spacer blocks **458** because of an increased duty cycle, operation, or on-time of thermoelectric modules **450**. For greater duty cycles, the higher percentage of time thermoelectric modules **450** are required to be active increases a corresponding amount of power that is consumed by the thermoelectric modules, which reduces a COP of the thermoelectric modules. Second, efficiency is decreased without the capacitance spacer blocks because of a reduction in thermal capacitance that prevents heat from transferring back in a direction along stack **470** in a direction opposite from a direction in which the heat or Qc was initially transferred by stack **470** of thermoelectric modules **450** during active use of the Peltier effect.

Smaller temperature differentials, or delta T, between adjacent thermoelectric modules **450** and hot sides **462** and cold sides **460** of the same thermoelectric module **450** can reduce thermal stress on the thermoelectric modules. Reduction of thermal stress within thermoelectric modules **450** reduces incidents of cracking at the nodes of the thermocouples. Thus, by reducing the thermal stress that can lead to cracking, wear on thermoelectric modules **450** is decreased and a period of operation or a lifetime of the thermoelectric module is increased.

By operating thermal protection systems **464** with smaller temperature differentials or delta Ts between adjacent thermoelectric modules **450** and hot sides **462** and cold sides **460** of the same thermoelectric module **450**, a smaller temperature differential or delta T also is maintained across heat sink **456** or between a hot side and a cold side of the heat sink. While conventional systems comprising a thermoelectric module and a heat sink might operate at an industry standard temperature differential of about a 15 degrees Celsius between hot and cold sides of the heat sink, the embodiment disclosed in FIG. **27**A can produce much smaller temperature differentials between hot and cold sides of the heat sink, which are closer to about 3 degrees Celsius. See, for example, the charts disclosed in FIGS. **32**A-**32**C.

A fan can optionally be disposed adjacent to heat sink **456** to aid in removal of heat from thermal protection system **464** including heat sink **456**. In an embodiment, thermal protection system **464** is configured to provide temperature control within a tolerance of less than about one degree centigrade.

Thermoelectric heat pump assembly **464** can also be used in a method of safely transporting temperature sensitive goods at a selected temperature profile during transport. Temperature sensitive goods **139** are placed in vessel **454** within the thermal protection system. Vessel **454** is adapted to thermally isolate the temperature sensitive goods **139** from an outside environment. Vessel **454** is coupled to the stack **470** of thermoelectric modules **450** and thermally capacitive spacer blocks **458**. A temperature of vessel **454** is controlled by activating the Peltier effect for stack **470** of the plurality of thermoelectric modules **450** and conducting heat from vessel **454** through the thermoelectric units to heat sink **456**.

FIG. **27**B, shows an embodiment of a thermal protections system **464***b* that is similar to thermal protections system **464***a* shown in FIG. **27**A. Thermal protections system **464***b* differs from thermal protections system **464***a* in that every thermoelectric module **450** does not include an interleaved capacitance spacer block **458** to form a sandwich layer. Instead, a number of capacitance spacer blocks **458** can be omitted from being disposed between a corresponding number of adjacent thermoelectric modules **450**. Accordingly, an entirety of thermoelectric modules **450**, or a portion less than an entirety of the thermoelectric modules can be in direct contact with each other and not include an intervening capacitance spacer block **458**.

Thus, FIG. **27**B shows generally that in various embodiments, capacitance spacer blocks **458** can be omitted from being disposed between every thermoelectric module **450** such that less than an entirety of the thermoelectric modules are in direct contact with each other and do not include an intervening capacitance spacer block **458**. While FIG. **27**B shows a single capacitance spacer block **458** disposed between thermoelectric modules **450***b* and **450***c*, a single capacitance spacer block could similarly be disposed between thermoelectric modules **450***a* and **450***b*, or **450***c* and **450***d*. In other embodiments, two capacitance spacer blocks could be disposed between thermoelectric modules, such as between **450***a* and **450***b* as well as between **450***c* and **450***d*; or alternatively, between thermoelectric modules **450***a* and **450***b* as well as between **450***b* and **450***c*; or alternatively, between thermoelectric modules **450***b* and **450***c* as well as between **450***c* and **450***d*.

FIG. **27**C, shows an embodiment of a thermal protections system **464***c* that is similar to thermal protections system **464***a* or **464***b* shown in FIG. **27**A or **27**B, respectively. Thermal protection system **464***c* differs from thermal protections systems **464***a* and **464***b* in that no capacitance spacer blocks **458** are interleaved between thermoelectric modules **450**, and thermoelectric modules **450** can be in direct contact with each other.

FIG. **28** shows a schematic cross-sectional view, in which multiple stacks **470** of thermoelectric modules **450** and capacitance spacer blocks **450**, such as stacks **470***a* from FIG. **27**A, can be arranged such that multiple stacks **470** may be placed in parallel and in thermal communication with vessel **454**. While two stacks **470** are shown in FIG. **28**, any number of any of stacks **470** shown herein, or variations thereof, can be thermally coupled in parallel to vessel **454** to provide additional thermal transport capability.

FIG. **29** shows a schematic cross-sectional view of a thermal protection system **464***e*, similar to thermal protection system **464***a* shown in FIG. **27**A. FIG. **29** shows thermal protection system **464***e* is a variation of thermal protection system **464***a* that includes a stack of 6 thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***f* and 5 capacitance spacer blocks **458** interleaved between the thermoelectric modules instead of the stack of 4 thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***d* and 3 capacitance spacer blocks **458** shown in FIG. **27**A. Similar to the variations indicated in FIG. **27**B or **27**C, not every thermoelectric module **450** in FIG. **29** needs to include an interleaved capacitance spacer block **458** to form a sandwich layer. Instead, a number of capacitance spacer blocks **458** can be omitted from being disposed between a corresponding number of adjacent thermoelectric modules **450**. Accordingly, an entirety of adjacent thermoelectric modules **450**, or a portion less than an entirety of the thermoelectric modules can be in direct contact with each other and not include an intervening capacitance spacer block **458**.

FIG. **30** shows a schematic cross-sectional view of a thermal protection system **464***f*, similar to thermal protection system **464***a* shown in FIG. **27**A. FIG. **30** shows thermal protection system **464***f* is a variation of thermal protection system **464***a* that includes a stack of 9 thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***i* and 8 capacitance spacer blocks **458** interleaved between the thermoelectric modules instead of the stack of 4 thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***d* and 3 capacitance spacer blocks **458** shown in FIG. **27**A. Similar to the variations indicated in FIG. **27**B or **27**C, not every thermoelectric module **450** in FIG. **30** needs to include an interleaved capacitance spacer block **458** to form a sandwich layer. Instead, a number of capacitance spacer blocks **458** can be omitted from being disposed between a corresponding number of adjacent thermoelectric modules **450**, such that an entirety, or a portion less than an entirety, of the thermoelectric modules can be in direct contact with each other and not include an intervening capacitance spacer block **458**.

FIG. **31** shows a schematic cross-sectional view of a thermal protection system **464***g*, similar to thermal protection system **464***a* shown in FIG. **27**A. FIG. **31** shows thermal protection system **464***g* is a variation of thermal protection system **464***a* that includes a stack of 2 thermoelectric modules **450***a* and **450***b* and 1 capacitance spacer block **458** interleaved between the thermoelectric modules instead of the stack of 4 thermoelectric modules **450***a*-**450***d* and 3 capacitance spacer blocks **458** shown in FIG. **27**A. Similar to the variations indicated in FIG. **27**B or **27**C, not every thermoelectric module **450** in FIG. **30** needs to include an interleaved capacitance spacer block **458** to form a sandwich layer. Instead, the capacitance spacer block **458** can be omitted from being disposed between both thermoelectric modules **450***a* and **450***b*, such that an entirety of the thermoelectric modules can be in direct contact with each other and not include an intervening capacitance spacer block **458**.

FIGS. **32**A-**32**C show charts, each of which illustrate how various embodiments maximize efficiency of operation compared to previously available thermoelectric heat pump systems. The charts further illustrate how various embodiments can be configured to maximize heat pumped per unit of input power during overall use, while minimizing the ratio of input current to maximum available current at a given steady-state temperature.

FIGS. **32**A-**32**C further emphasize advantages of thermoelectric transport or storage device **102** or thermal protection system **464** in which the maximum current, current, maximum Delta-T, Delta-T, transferred heat, voltage, ratio of current to maximum current, ratio of Delta-T to maximum Delta-T, are displayed. The maximum values indicated within FIGS. **32**A-**32**C, such as Imax and Qmax, are those values provided by a manufacturer in the specifications for a particular part or thermoelectric module. Determining a size or capacity for a particular component can based on design constraints and manufacturer specifications for particular component features or parameters such as Imax and Qmax. Sizing components based on manufacturer recommendations can also be accomplished using automated systems and software programs such as "Aztec Thermoelectric Cooler Analysis" software, made by Laird Technologies.

FIG. **32**A shows further details for the configuration of thermal protection system **464***a* from FIG. **27**A when consuming approximately 1 watt of power during operation. FIG. **24**B shows further details for the configuration of thermal protection system **464***a* from FIG. **27**A consuming approximately 3 watts of power during operation. FIG. **24**C shows further details for the configuration of thermal protection system **464***a* from FIG. **27**A consuming approximately 5 watts of power during operation.

As indicated previously, the COP is defined as the amount of heat transferred from thermal vessel **454** divided by the amount of power (voltage multiplied by current) required to operate thermoelectric transport or storage device **102** or protections system **464**. As can be seen from a comparison of FIGS. **32**A-**32**C, as voltage increases for a given thermoelectric module **450**, delta T, or a temperature difference between a cold side **460** and a hot side **462**, also increases and a COP decreases along a same direction of stack **470**. However, as seen in FIGS. **32**A-**32**C, the operating point coefficient of performance for thermal protections system **464** is well above the typical operating point coefficient of performance. That is, thermal protection system **464** is able to pump more heat from vessel **454** to heat sink **456** using less current and ultimately less power than typical thermoelectric systems.

Although applicant has described various embodiment of the disclosure, it will be understood that the broadest scope of the disclosure includes modifications. Such scope is limited only by the below claims as read in connection with the above specification. Further, many other advantages of applicant's invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art from the above descriptions and the below claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A thermal protection system, relating to thermally protecting temperature sensitive goods, comprising:
 a vessel configured to contain the temperature sensitive goods;
 a stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules thermally coupled to the vessel arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured such that each thermoelectric module within the stack simultaneously use the Peltier effect, wherein the stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules comprise a delta T that increases for each thermoelectric module in a first direction along the stack and an amount of heat transferred by the thermoelectric module (Qc) that increases for each thermoelectric module in a second direction opposite the first direction;
 a thermally capacitive spacer block disposed between each of the at least three identical thermoelectric modules;
 an energy source coupled to the stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules and configured to provide a current source to each of the serially connected thermoelectric modules;
 a heat sink coupled to the stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules and thermally capacitive spacer blocks opposite the vessel; and
 a microcontroller operatively associated with the energy source to direct current from the energy source to the stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules.

2. The thermal protection system of claim **1**, wherein the microcontroller defines a setpoint temperature (Tsp) and compares the Tsp to a temperature (Tc) of a container coupled to the stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules and activates a simultaneous use of the Peltier effect for a duration to reduce a difference in temperature between the Tsp and Tc.

3. The thermal protection system of claim **2**, wherein the microcontroller is configured to vary a voltage to the thermoelectric modules by varying a pulse-width-modulation (PWM), a pulse-frequency-modulation (PFM), or a thermal capacitance of the thermal protection system.

4. The thermal protection system of claim **2**, wherein:
 the Tsp is defined as a range of temperatures; and
 the Tsp and Tc are compared with a resolution greater than or equal to 0.01 degrees Celsius.

5. The thermal protection system of claim **2**, wherein the microcontroller is configured to received a user defined Tsp.

6. The thermal protection system of claim **1**, wherein each thermoelectric module comprises at least 127 coupled pairs of thermocouples and a resistance of at least 1 ohm.

7. A thermal protection system, relating to thermally protecting temperature sensitive goods, comprising:
 a vessel configured to contain the temperature sensitive goods;
 a stack of at least three thermoelectric modules thermally coupled to the vessel and arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured such that each thermoelectric module within the stack simultaneously use the Peltier effect, wherein the stack of at least three thermoelectric modules comprise a delta T that increases for each thermoelectric module in a first direction along the stack and an amount of heat transferred by the thermoelectric module (Qc) that increases for each thermoelectric module in a second direction opposite the first direction;
 a thermally capacitive spacer block disposed between each of the at least three thermoelectric modules;
 an energy source coupled to the stack of at least three thermoelectric modules and configured to provide a current source to each of the serially connected thermoelectric modules; and
 a heat sink coupled to the stack of at least three thermoelectric modules and thermally capacitive spacer blocks opposite the vessel.

8. The thermal protection system of claim **7**, wherein each of the thermoelectric modules are substantially identical.

9. The thermal protection system of claim **7**, wherein each of the thermoelectric modules includes a same number of thermocouples.

10. The thermal protection system of claim **7**, further comprising four or more thermoelectric modules in each stack of at least three thermoelectric modules.

11. The thermal protection system of claim **1**, wherein the stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules and comprises a height greater than or equal to 2.5 cm, thereby providing a space for insulation around the stack of at least three identical thermoelectric modules between the vessel and the heat sink.

12. The thermal protection system of claim **7**, wherein the stack of at least three thermoelectric modules is configured to provide temperature control to at least one temperature to within a tolerance of less than about six degrees centigrade.

13. A thermal protection system, relating to thermally protecting temperature sensitive goods, comprising:
 a vessel configured to contain the temperature sensitive goods;
 a stack of at least two thermoelectric modules coupled to the vessel and arranged electrically and thermally in series and configured such that each thermoelectric module within the stack simultaneously use the Peltier effect, wherein the stack of at least two thermoelectric modules comprise a delta T that increases for each thermoelectric module in a first direction along the stack and an amount of heat transferred by the thermoelectric module (Qc) that increases for each thermoelectric module in a second direction opposite the first direction;
 a thermally capacitive spacer block thermally coupled to the stack of at least two thermoelectric modules; and
 a heat sink coupled to the stack of at least two thermoelectric modules and thermally capacitive spacer block opposite the vessel.

14. The thermal protection system of claim **13**, wherein the thermally capacitive spacer block is disposed between the stack of at least two thermoelectric modules.

15. The thermal protection system of claim **13**, wherein at least one energy source is operably connected to each thermoelectric module, wherein the energy source is suitable to provide a current, the thermal protection system being configured so that each individual thermoelectric module has a ratio of input current to maximum available current (I/Imax) of 0.17 or less at a steady-state when a change in temperature (ΔT) of the thermal protection system between the vessel and the heat sink is about 20° C. and heat removal (Q) is about 0 Watts.

16. The thermal protection system of claim **13**, wherein each of the thermoelectric modules are substantially identical.

17. The thermal protection system of claim **13**, wherein each of the thermoelectric modules includes a same size.

18. The thermal protection system of claim **13**, wherein the stack of at least two thermoelectric modules is configured to provide temperature control to at least one temperature to within a tolerance of less than about fifteen degrees centigrade.

19. A method of safely transporting temperature sensitive goods at a selected temperature profile during transport using the thermal protection system assembly of claim **13**, comprising:

placing the temperature sensitive goods in a thermal isolation chamber within the transportation device, the thermal isolation chamber adapted to thermally isolate the temperature sensitive goods from an outside environment;

coupling the thermal isolation chamber to the stack of at least two thermoelectric modules; and

controlling a temperature of the thermal isolation control system by activating the Peltier effect of the at least two thermoelectric modules.

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